

The Mountain Top Messenger

Zion Lutheran Church

VOLUME 54, ISSUE #12 DECEMBER 2017

A blessed Advent season and Merry Christmas to you all. As I write this I am preparing for the Thanksgiving Eve service and working on our service for the last Sunday of the church year. Then on the 30th of November we will start Advent and a new church year followed quickly by Christmas and then New Years. It all happens so fast, we barely have time to soak it all in, to take a breath and relax. I don't know about you, but as I think back when I was a child it seemed like that time between Thanksgiving and Christmas took forever, it simply dragged by, each day seemed like a month because of the anticipation. Perhaps part of that was in that time you didn't even start thinking or hearing about Christmas and Christmas sales until after Thanksgiving. It seems that the desire of the world to have us spend our money as soon as possible has made the pre-Christmas season longer and longer. It is not at all unusually to see the Christmas stuff coming out after Halloween, or even before in some cases.

So, as I thought about this, two things came to mind; first what if we treated the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus, the same way that merchants try to have more and more time to pedal their wares. I think we should look into the world of merchandising and advertising and learn their lessons of convincing the world of what they need. The biggest difference of course is they are convincing them to spend their money in an attempt to satisfy their worldly desires. We, on the other hand, would be showing them how to achieve their eternal salvation. You would think that it would be an easy sell, right? You can have what the world has to offer for 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, years or you can have what God has to offer forever. Alas, the world has all the visual glitz and glamor, you can see all the fun and excitement your neighbors are having, the here and the now. When it comes to salvation, you have to visualize, you have to trust, you have to have faith to see the treasures of eternal peace with God. The world makes it so easy, it floods the senses, the sights, the sounds, it has all the commercials, the paid spokes people, trying to lure you into that next car, or snowmobile, or ATV, that better body, the makeup, the clothes. You can have everything you want, right here, right now. What do we have to counter with? The book, the promise, and the power of the Holy Spirit. It doesn't seem like a fair fight, does it? Guess what it's not, the world cannot and will not win! It is indeed the message that we are to share, while at times it may seem like we are not making any headway, remember we are the seed planters, the Holy Spirit makes them grow, we simply keep on planting. And we do that planting through our words and through our witness. And now is the best time of the year to show that witness in the way that we live our lives and share the message of our Savior and we prepare both for his first coming and his second coming.

Which leads me to my second thought. The older I get the faster it seems that time goes. As I said, as a child the time from Thanksgiving to Christmas seemed to take forever, now it seems like the blink of an eye. Someone once told me "life is like a roll of toilet paper, the closer you get to the end the faster it goes". I am finding that to be a truism. And as I find that to be true I also find that I tend to think more not of Christ's first coming at Christmas but of His second coming that we have been hearing about as our church year ends. While both Advents are indeed wonderful events and reasons for praise and prayer, you can't have one without the other. So, as you prepare to celebrate our Lord humbling himself and becoming man this Christmas season in that manger in Bethlehem, remember also, that manger led to the cross, and to his coming again to bring us all to be with him forever.



Jesus is the reason for the season, keep him always at the forefront of your thoughts, as you live your lives, as you share your lives, and as you prepare for His coming, both then in that manger in Bethlehem and His coming again; when? Soon!

Merry Christmas to you all, and as Paul wrote to the Philippians: *And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,*

will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7)

God Bless, Pastor Rick



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Pastor Rick Williams - 715-209-0479 Office Hours: M/T/W/Th 6:00am-2:00pm (Please call ahead if you need to speak with Pastor Williams as he may be visiting shut-in's, at a conference, etc.)

Church President: Nick Jarvela 715-682-0385

Head Elder: Darryl Warren 715-492-0488

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

LFOJ Administrator: Karyn Leino 715-682-6075

DECEMBER Our Prayer Concerns

Mission

Zion Lutheran Church (monthly missions, Sewing Circle) LWML Jordan Kroll Mission
Little Friends of Jesus Childcare Center

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.

PRAYERS FOR HEALTH AND HEALING

For good test results, treatment, positive thinking, healing, and comfort during cancer treatments, for those suffering from addiction, mental illness and for healing, strength, comfort, and peace for family we pray for: *Bob Heggie, Kevin Heggie, Joni Frisco, Brad Prill, Jean Wickman, Fran Fleig, Eddie Brown, Johnny Galligan, Alice Balmer, Mary Bullis,, Sheldon Henri, Violet Basina, Tim Smith, Jim Bullis, Ellen Hodgson, Joe Stach, Tyler Lehto, Doug Tutor, Patti Louko Berg, Barb Bjork, Joan Spalding, Ruth Goldman, Eric Kontny, Lloyd Koosmann, Addilynn Schneider, Sandy Fletcher, Tim Fulton, Jodi Kistner, Duane Lynch, David Palm, Jerry Karaba, Allison, and those in our hearts.*

PRAYERS FOR HOMEBOUND Those who aren't able to attend common worship that they would find comfort knowing that the Lord is with them. *Walt Schutte, Arlene Zimmerman, Madge Houle*

PRAYERS FOR PROTECTION For our full-time troops and public servants, for travelers, missionaries, and for peace and protection for families.

Aaron Esala, David Wright, Johanna Pearce, Emily Melecha, Tucker Melecha



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 the 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.



SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Sunday, December 17th 9:00am

Please be sure to join in on Sunday's service for the rendition of the Christmas story by Zion's Sunday School children.



Thank-you to Brooke Sapper and Sydney Vyskocil who are the program guides.

Refreshments will be served after the service.

Stewardship Thoughts

Merry Christmas! Yes, it's time for parties, shopping, family gatherings, blowing the budget, stress and the over all frazzled worn out feeling. Sound familiar? Hitting too close to home?

Now, let's sit and reason together as The Lord tells us in Isaiah. Whose are you? Weren't you bought at price? Therefore, you are not your own. You are a child of God, bought and purchased by the blood and death of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, on the cross. The very Lamb whose birth we celebrate at Christmas. Why? Because the Lamb of God is risen and living in us by the Holy Spirit given through grace and faith at our baptism.

Why keep this a secret? Souls are perishing and panting for the Gift of Salvation. Let's share the Good News! Proclaim it in the streets, shout it from the housetops. Tell it at the corner of Main and Ellis

So, this Christmas, share the gift of salvation. It doesn't cost anything, although it cost Jesus his life at Calvary. Even so, we are told to spread the Good News. How beautiful are the feet of those who proclaim the Gospel.

Let's start giving! Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas, indeed! Alleluia! Amen!

The Stewardship Board

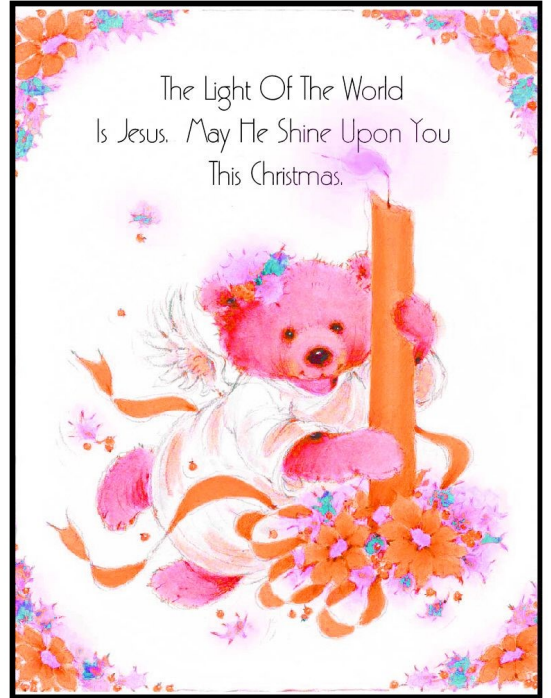
LFOJ HAPPENINGS

Little Friends of Jesus

LFOJ Christmas Program, "The Many Shapes of Christmas" is on Tuesday, December 19th, at 6:30pm We would like to see an overflowing Sanctuary. Refreshments will be served afterwards.

Monday Dec. 25th and Tuesday Dec. 26th and Jan. 1st the center will be closed.

Have a blessed Christmas, and thank you for all you do for us! —The LFOJ Staff



Advent Services 6:30pm Dec. 6, 13, 20
Sunday School Children's Program
9:00am Sunday, December 17th
LFOJ Christmas Program
6:30pm Tuesday, December 19
Christmas Eve Candlelight Services
4:00pm and 7:00pm December 24
Christmas Morning Service
9:00am December 25

LCEF Scholarships The Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) - Central Region Scholarship applications are available now through Jan. 31, 2018. NWD graduating high school seniors and current college students are encouraged to apply. All the details & the on-line application are available on the LCEF Central Region site.



Poinsettia Box

Donations for purchasing poinsettias will be in the Narthex now through Dec. 10th



Evangelism Board and Sunday School Coats-Plus Project

Pastor spoke with the Sunday School explaining the project. The groups received monetary and clothing donations. Children's names were gathered from various resources in the city and church. With the monetary donations they went to Army/Navy and picked out jackets, snowpants and/or boots for children infant to middle school ages.



Sunday, November 12th the Evangelism Board had a dual celebration thanks to a Thrivent Action Team Grant. First, honoring our Veterans. Second, the Coats-Plus for Kids Project.

They would like to thank everyone who participated and to let you know, the children who received the items were all smiles and "high-fives". It warms your heart when you see these little ones, and not so

Father John and His Young Parishioner

It was the Sunday after Christmas at St Peter and Saint Paul's Church in Borden, Kent, England. Father John was looking at the nativity scene prior to packing away the figures when he noticed the baby Jesus was missing from the scene.

Immediately, Father John turned towards the vicarage in order to call the police. But as he was about to do so, he saw little Harry with a red wagon, and in the wagon was the figure of the little infant, Jesus.

Father John walked up to Harry and said, 'Well, Harry, where did you get the little infant?'

Harry replied honestly, 'I took him from the church, Father John.'

'And why did you take him?'

With a sheepish smile, Harry said, 'Well, about a week before Christmas I prayed to little Lord Jesus. I told him if he would bring me a red wagon for Christmas, I would give him a ride around the block in it.'



The Meaning of '12 Days of Christmas'

There is one particular Christmas Carol that has always baffled Will. What in the world do leaping lords, French hens, swimming swans, and especially the partridge who won't come out of the pear tree have to do with Christmas?

From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly. Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism song for young Catholics. It has two levels of meaning: the surface meaning plus a hidden meaning known only to members of their church.

Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality which the children could remember.



The partridge in a pear tree was **Jesus Christ**.

Two turtle doves were the **Old and New Testaments**.

Three French hens stood for **faith, hope and love**.

The **four** calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and **John**.

The **five** golden rings recalled the **Torah or Law, the first five books of the Old Testa-**

ment.

The **six** geese a-laying stood for the **six days of creation**.

Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit: **Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy**.

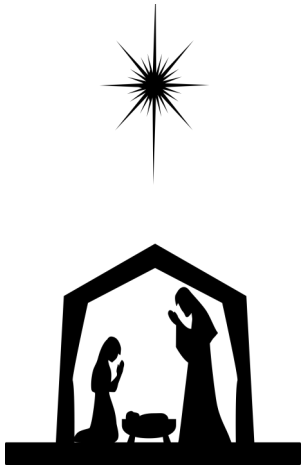
The **eight** maids a-milking were the **eight beatitudes**.

Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit: **Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self Control**.

The **ten** lords a-leaping were the **ten commandments**.

The **eleven** pipers piping stood for the **eleven faithful disciples**.

The **twelve** drummers drumming symbolized the **twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed**.



Who would have thought a simple birth in a simple stable would be story that would still live "in" us today? Is it the song of angels that dazzles us, or the simple trust of shepherds? Maybe it is Mary's quiet acceptance, or Joseph's simple faith? Or maybe it is wise men who load up camels and follow a star? Whatever it is, the Bethlehem story is a God-story... and it is powerful yet today.

Imagine how many children have worn bathrobes like shepherds, or wore angel wings, and or carried gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to tell the story of Jesus' birth: in churches, programs, schools...and more. Now there is even a movie: Sony Pictures, *The Star*. (I want to see this.) Somehow, we can't let go of this story, for we know it defines our lives today, and we still seek to better know that Christ Child. To know a faith that calls us to hitch our lives to a star and follow Him? To know a peace that offers rest in His Inn. To know the promise that Christ dwells among us.

So, dear friends, as we draw close to the simple story of Christmas... and look upon the Babe of Bethlehem, let us remember that God sent His Son to live among us that we may believe in Him for today... and for always. Yes, this is an amazing story of God's holy design that takes the simple elements of earthly life and transforms them into a love story of redemption and grace. May we once again hear angels at Christmas, see each other as eager shepherds and dedicated wise (wo)men, for the Bethlehem story is our story. Be Blessed in the Christ Child. -A. Ellis

Note of Thanks: Herb and I were married on December 30th, 1967, on a bitter cold night (outside) at Zion Lutheran Church (on Ellis Avenue). We remember how family and friends gathered around us with their warm love and blessed friendship. This December is 50 years for us! Thank you, one and all, for your friendship and love. God is our Keeper: Thanks be to Him.

HOLLY LEAF PROJECT

Ashland Health and Rehabilitation Center (AHRC)

We will be posting leaves to take off the bulletin board soon. Each leaf will have a gift suggestion that will be presented to one of its residents. You can drop off the present directly at AHRC or then to the office by December 10th. *AHRC would like to thank all of those who have sent over gifts in the past!! The residents sure have big smiles on the day of their party when they receive a present. AHRC*



Daily Devotions
Lutheran Women in Mission

Help, Lord!

In the Word

Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins. [Psalm 25:16, 18](#)

Of the Word

In times of affliction and loneliness, it is tempting to grow impatient with God. Our faith can grow weak. During these times it may seem that God is slow to show His presence and give us relief.

Even in his failures, loneliness, and affliction, the psalmist David knew God would not fail him. David asked the Lord for grace and forgiveness, trusting the Lord would answer according to His perfect will.

We, like David, are imperfect people. We fall into the traps of fear, anger, doubt, and worry which can be compounded by our feelings of loneliness. We allow impatience with our Heavenly Father to worm its way into our already discouraged state of mind. Our prayers may turn into "my will be done" instead of "*your will be done*" ([Matthew 6:10b](#)).

But by the grace given us through Christ's death and resurrection we are forgiven people! When we turn to God He will be gracious to us. He will forgive our doubt. He assures us ... *if we ask anything according to his will he hears us* ([1 John 5:14b](#)).

Walking with my Lord

Lord, give me faith and patience when I feel hurt and alone. Help me to remember Your promises of love and forgiveness. In Your name I pray. Amen.

December Mission

LFOJ Wish List

Items can be dropped off in the narthex.



Batteries (AA, AAA, C, D)

Masking tape

Shaving cream

Stickers

Washable paint

Double sided tape

Acrylic paint (any colors)

scotch tape

staples

washable finger paint

white computer paper

chunky crayons

google eyes (large)

coffee filters

Doll high chair

Magna-forms

Stainless steel pots and pans

Dramatic play clothes (community helper)

Rubbermaid food storage containers (4, 5, or 6 cups)

Small storage bins (shoebox size or slightly bigger)

paint shirts

Hot Wheels cars/race track pieces

Griddle

Tall bookshelf for movie/book storage



White noise, ocean wave CD or machine

Fisher Price Medical Kit

Fisher Price Stack/Explore blocks

Bright Starts Playful Pinwheels Bouncer

Fisher Price Count and Learn Piggy Bank

Fisher Price First Words Animals Blocks



Zion Lutheran Council Minutes: November 20, 2017

The November meeting was called to order by Council Member, Chuck Chronis. Pastor Williams opened with thoughts and prayer about the need and importance of our call to “do good work.”

Roll Call: Chuck Chronis- Stewardship, Mary Koosmann- Financial Secretary, Carol Key- Co-Treasurer, Lisa Guski- Co-Treasurer/LFOJ, Lynn Ladd- Education, Lori Landry-Evangelism, Daryl Warren-Elders, Ron Schwiesow- Trustees, Alice Ellis- Secretary, Pastor Rick Williams.

Approval of October Minutes: Motion to approve by Landry. Second by Key. MMC.

Pastor's Report: Worship services and education/Bible study opportunities are going well. There will be NO Sunday morning worship service on Dec. 24; Christmas Eve services will be at 4 and 7 pm. Please check newsletter for timings, etc. Pastor Rick talked to BAYNET about providing music for our monthly Praise service; it sounds like BAYNET is available every other month. There is no charge, but BAYNET requests we put the money into ministry.

Treasurer's Report: (Warren arrived to lead meeting.) Motion to approve as written by Ladd. Second by Koosmann. MMC.

Approval of Agenda: With the addition of Detroit Lutheran School letter, motion to approve by Chronis. Second by Guski. MMC.

Board Reports:

Elders: Warren reported the elders are discussing security and safety plans.

Trustees: Schwiesow reported that Zion went with Acquity for general insurance and Workmen's Comp. The LFOJ Deck is completed.

Financial Secretary: Koosmann reported that new envelopes are soon ready. Ways to keep this expense as low as possible were discussed.

Education: Ladd reported Sunday School Christmas program is Dec. 17th. We still NEED a Superintendent.

LFOJ: Guski reported that slippery spots on the deck are being addressed. Ed Monroe did LFOJ pics. Staff is working on Bremer Grant. Christmas Program is Dec. 19th. On Dec. 5th, LFOJ students will sing the National Anthem at the Ashland Basketball Game.

Evangelism: Landry reported that “Coats Plus For Kids” is winding down after a successful program. Evangelism is working on College Gift Boxes.

Motion to accept Board Reports by Chronis. Second by Landry. MMC.

Official Acts:

Baptism: Austin Line 11-12-2017

New Member: Sherry L. Stolarzyk 10-18-2017

Old Business:

2018 Budget: Motion to pay out \$3000 to be kept in Youth Account for future events. Also talked about inquiring about a college intern to head up youth program. Motion to approve proposed budget by Landry. Second by Chronis. MMC.

2018 Board Member Recommendations: Motion to accept the slate of nominees by Guski. Second by Chronis. MMC.

New Business:

Safety/Security Plan: Warren reported the Elders are working on a plan with the intention to involve trustees to form a “committee.” Also, LFOJ will be encouraged to implement a safety plan.

Payroll/Reports: FYI Services to support payroll accounts are “out there” if the need arises.

December Meetings: Congregational Meeting is December 10th. Motion to cancel the Council December 18th meeting by Guski. Second by Chronis. MMC.

Detroit Lutheran School letter: To be addressed at Feb. 2018 meeting.

Motion to adjourn by Guski. Second by Chronis. Next Council meeting in January. November meeting was closed with *The Lord's Prayer*.



ANNUAL MEETING
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10TH

DECEMBER 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!! If you would like to be added or taken off one of our lists please contact the office. Greeters and Ushers should arrive 20 minutes before services start. Thank-you to all who serve.

December	Elders	Acolytes	Ushers	Greeters
Sun. 3	Scott Thimm Randy Spangle	Emily & Faith Dickrell	Chuck Chronis Todd Vyskocil	Thimm Family
Wed. 6	John Pruss	Trista Bolz Austin Vyskocil	Jim Hebert	Jim Johnson
Sun. 10	Darryl Warren Scott Thimm	Adeline Bauer Lily Truchon	Kurt Harpster 'Larry Hildebrandt	Lipske Family
Wed. 13	Doug Warren	Justin Esala	Scott Sapper	Scott & Becky Sapper
Sun. 17	John Pruss	Trista Bolz Daniel Truchon	Karl Williams 'Andrew Wickman	Herb & Alice Ellis
Wed. 20	Andy Pruss	Austin Vyskocil	Brian Klobucher	Karen Wahl
Sun. 24 4:00pm	Doug Warren Scott Thimm	Emily & Faith Dickrell	Jordan Thimm Clarence Osmak	Rick & Sandy Nutt
Sun. 24 7:00pm	Randy Spangle Darryl Warren	Adeline Bauer	Devin Sunie	Adam Hinch
Mon. 25 9:00am	John Pruss	Justin Esala	Jake Pruss	Janet and Tiffany Houle
No Wednesday, Dec. 27th Service				
Sun. 31	Randy Spangle Andy Pruss	Daniel Truchon	Cody Sunie	Wickman Family
Wed. Jan. 3	Scott Thimm			
Sun. Jan. 7	Doug Warren Darryl Warren	Lily Truchon	Loren Munson	Nick & Jule Jarvela



**2017 Annual report due in office by
January 15th. Please email to
secretary@zionlutheranashland.com**

Merry Christmas



June Williams 715-208-0984
Tami Thimm 715- 682-4817
Joann Honkala 715-682-0175
Dawn Reardon (Wed.) 715-209-6774

OFFICIAL ACTS
Baptism:
Austin Line 11-12-17

Little Friends of Jesus
 Preschool and Daycare
 1111 11th Ave. W.
 Ashland, WI 54806
 715-682-5185



Zion Lutheran Church
 1111 11th Ave. W.
 Ashland, WI 54806
 715-682-6075
 zionashland@hotmail.com

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 Mite Sunday Worship 9:00am Sunday School Practice 10:15am Bible Study 10:15am	4 Bible Study 10::00 am	5 LFOJ Chapel 11:00am	6 LFOJ Chapel 11:00am Confirmation 4-5:30pm Advent 6:30pm	7	8	9
10 Elders' Mtg. 7:45am Worship 9:00am Annual Meeting 10:15 Sunday School Practice 10:15am	11 Bible Study 10::00 am	12 Sewing Circle 1:00pm	13 Confirmation 4-5:30pm Advent 6:30pm	14	15 <i>Newsletter Reports Due</i>	16
17 Food Shelf Worship 9:00am Sunday School Christmas Pro- gram	18 Bible Study 10::00 am	19 LFOJ Christmas Program 6:30pm	20 Confirmation 4-5:30pm Advent 6:30pm	21	22	23
24 (no 9:00am) Christmas Eve 4:00pm Christmas Eve Rejoice 7:00pm	25 Christmas Celebra- tion 9:00am	26	27 No Service	28	29	30