



# The Mountain Top Messenger

MAY 2023

ZION LUTHERAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH, LCMS ASHLAND, WI

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
<b>Elders:</b> May 3 Doug May 7 JohnP May 10 Andy May 14 JohnS May 17 Darryl May 21 Randy May 24 Scott May 28 Doug May 31 Andy June 4 Darryl June 7 JohnP						
	<b>1</b> 10:00am Bible Study	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>  <b>6:30pm Worship</b>	<b>4</b>  6:30pm Women's Bible Study	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b> 9:00am Worship 10:15am Bible Study 2:00pm LGP	<b>8</b> 6:00pm Altar Guild Pastor Conference	<b>9</b> 1:00pm Sewing Circle	<b>10</b>  <b>6:30pm Worship</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>14 Mother's Day</b> 8:45am Sunday School 9:00am Worship 9:45am Confirmation 10:15am Bible Study	<b>15</b> 10:00am Bible Study  5:30pm Council	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>  <b>6:30pm Worship Service</b>	<b>18</b> Winkel 9am  6:30pm Women's Bible Study	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b> 9:00am Worship 10:15am Bible Study 2:00pm LGP	<b>22</b> 10:00am Bible Study	<b>23</b> 1:00pm Sewing Circle	<b>24</b>  <b>6:30pm Worship</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> 9:00am Worship 10:15am Bible Study	<b>29 Offices Closed</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>  <b>6:30pm Worship</b>			



### May Altar Guild

Linda Klobucher 715-246-2064  
Lori Anderson 715-292-2122

### OFFICIAL ACTS

Death David Pearson 4-4-2023



As the weather finally appears to be changing, as I prepare for my mother's funeral, as I look at life in general, I wonder how those who do not have faith in God and believe in salvation through Jesus Christ make it from day to day. The world seems to be struggling with an identity crisis. Everyone is looking for answers, but unfortunately most of them are looking in the wrong places.

The world, Satan, is trying to convince us that the answers can be found within ourselves. We, if we try hard enough can be good enough to save ourselves. I am of the belief and understanding that I couldn't save myself from being in a paper bag. What in the world can I do to save myself from sin, death, and condemnation? Can I help feed the hungry? Shelter the homeless? Give my money to the poor? Why yes, indeed I can do all of those things, but even if I give every ounce of food to the homeless, every covered space I have to the unsheltered, and every penny I have to the poor, I can never do enough to make up for my sin. I can never do enough to earn my way to salvation.

So then you might ask, well if that's the case then why even try? We try, we do the best we can, why? Because we have been saved! Because of our belief in God the Father and our faith in His Son our Savior, we do the best we can. By doing the best we can show others what that faith looks like. We don't have to try and conform to all of the crazy ideas that the world puts before us.

We live by the two simple commandments that the Lord has given us. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your mind and love your neighbor as yourself. By loving our neighbor we share the love the Father has for us. By loving our neighbor we know that the Lord watches over us and helps us. We do it not as a work but out of gratitude for what has been given to us. We have received the gift for free and we must in turn share the gift with those who don't have it and also help strengthen those who share the gift with us. We have been blessed and in turn should bless others with our blessings. For through our faith in Jesus Christ we have hope, that sure and certain hope of life everlasting.

(cont. on the next page)

So as things change, as friends and family are called home in the faith, I am reminded again of one of my favorite scripture passages. I know I have quoted it before in other newsletters, but just as scripture repeats things that are important, so I repeat this passage again:

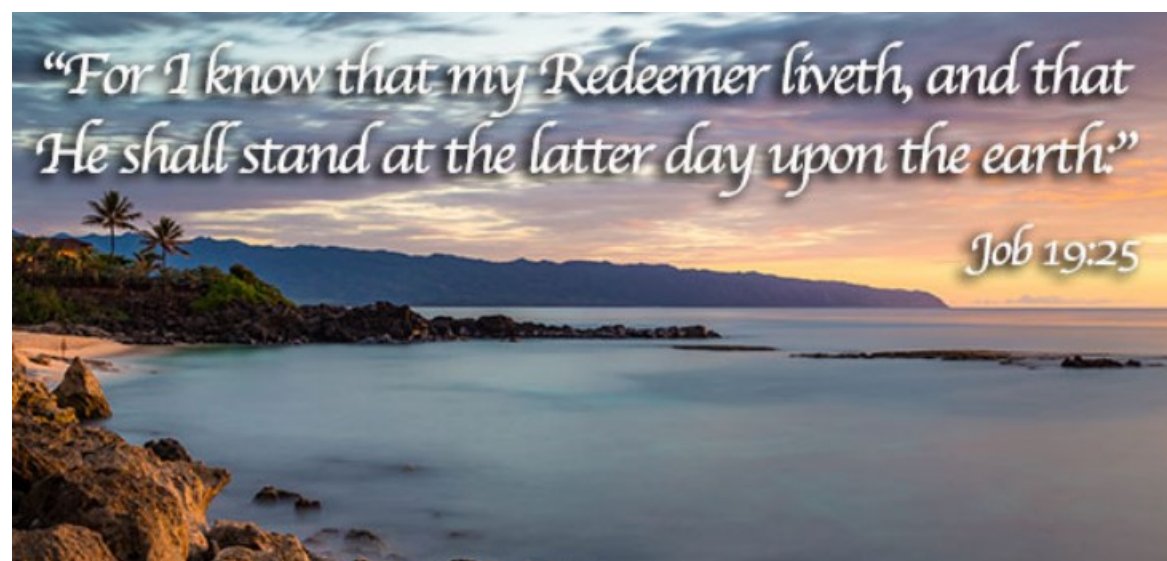
*<sup>13</sup> Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. <sup>15</sup> According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. <sup>18</sup> Therefore encourage one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.)*

I don't want you to be uninformed, we will not grieve like those who have no hope, and for now we have been left until the coming of the Lord. However,

*<sup>25</sup> I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. <sup>26</sup> And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; <sup>27</sup> I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me! (Job 19:25-27)*

I pray you have a blessed May, enjoy spring, and enjoy the newness of life. And now; May the Lord Bless you and keep you, may the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you, may the Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

Pastor Rick

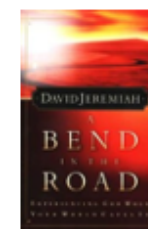


**Divine Disruption: Holding on to Faith When Life Breaks Your Heart** Book by Dr. Tony Evans

The Evans Family pulls back the curtain on their faith-shaking experiences in order to provide biblical wisdom and practical encouragement for how to deal with the hard, unexpected things we all inevitably face.

- Why bad things happen despite a good and powerful God
- Persevering in difficult times and experiencing God's peace

Your life may have been interrupted, but you can use that to grow closer to God—and find peace.



**A Bend in the Road**, Book by: Dr. David Jeremiah

Renowned pastor/teacher David Jeremiah shares the comfort and hope of the Psalms and how these truths can guide believers through life's greatest challenges. He includes inspiring real-life stories of people who have struggled with terminal illness, the loss of a child, or imprisonment of a spouse.



**Gary Chapman - 5 Love Languages Set - The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love That Lasts, Things I Wish I'd Known Before We Got Married** Book by Gary Chapman

With a divorce rate that hovers around 50 percent, don't let yourself become a statistic. Chapman teaches you and your future spouse how to work together as an intimate team! He shares with engaged couples practical tips he wishes he knew before he got married. Discussion centers around love, romance, conflict resolution, forgiveness, and sexual

fulfillment.



**War Room: DVD** 2 hr. 2015 (PG) A compelling drama of a family on the brink. Told with humor and heart as it explores the power that prayer can have on every area of our lives.

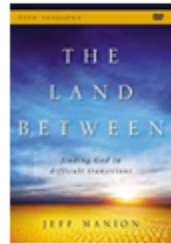


**Bitter-Sweet** It's that time of the year when we can start mowing lawns. For some it's an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors. For others, especially with allergies not so much fun. One huge plus is that it isn't shoveling snow. We saw plenty of that this year. There will be a sign-up sheet in the Narthex on the small bulletin board by the entrance. The church has the equipment to do the work. Speak with any of the Trustees for further information.



Check out our library's new resources.

Modern-day Christian authors share God's wisdom through stories, devotions, advice books, and deep dives into human problems. Our library has material that will comfort, delight, and challenge. Check it out. If you don't find a topic you're interested in, request it for our collection. If you're searching, others are as well.



**The Land Between: Finding God in Difficult Transitions Book** by Jeff Manion  
Provides fresh biblical insight for people traveling through undesired transitions - foreclosure, unemployment, parents in declining health, post-graduate uncertainty, business failure - who are looking for hope, guidance, and encouragement. What if life's transitions are there to remind us that God is present before, during, and after these periods?



**It's Okay Not to Be Okay: Moving Forward One Day at a Time**  
Book by [Sheila Walsh](#)  
We've all experienced that moment where we wish we could start all over again. Failed marriages, lost friends, addictions, lost jobs. This is not the life we imagined. Yesterday can sometimes leave us stuck, sad, shamed, scared, and searching. Walsh helps women overcome the same old rut of struggles and pain by changing the way they think about God, themselves, and their everyday lives.



**Why I Hate Green Beans: And Other Confessions about Relationships, Reality TV, and How We See Ourselves** Book by [Lincee Ray](#)  
For every woman who's ever wondered if she's unlovable, uninteresting, or unattractive, Lincee offers her particular brand of hilarious (and hard-hitting) self-reflection. She shows us that the fastest way to happiness is to embrace ourselves in all our imperfection, trust that God knew what he was doing when he made us, and maybe go buy a new tube of mascara.



**Silent Cry: The True Story of Abuse and Betrayal of an NFL Wife** Book by Dorothy J. Newton and Sheila Walsh  
This is a story about triumph and grace. Dorothy Newton bravely tells her story of abuse to encourage others that even in the midst of heartbreak and pain, God is faithful. Dorothy's will to live and the peace that comes with hope in the God who sees and hears your tears—even when no one else does.



**Without This Ring: Surviving Divorce** Book by [Donna Pyle](#)  
A survival guide for Christians who are navigating the minefield of divorce. The author knows what it's like, dealing with the anger, struggling with the idea of forgiveness. From a firm biblical standpoint, she gives clear steps on how to deal with the trauma and grief, helping readers understand that though they are wounded, it is possible to emerge a new person who has forgiven your partner and turned a new leaf on life without the burden of guilt.



**ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**1111-11TH AVE WEST**  
**ASHLAND, WI 54806**

**Sunday Worship Service** 9:00am live streamed  
**Wednesday Evening Service** 6:30pm  
**Sunday School** (September - May)  
**Bible Studies**

Sunday 10:15am Monday 10:00am 1st/3rd Thursday 6:30pm Women's Group

**Pastor Rick Williams -**  
715-209-0479

**Office Hours:**  
M/TH 9:00-5:00 T off  
W 12:00-8:00 F 9:00-12:00  
Please call ahead if you need to speak with Pastor.

**Office Secretary Lynn Ladd**  
715-682-6075  
Office Hours M-W 8:30-2:30  
Days and times may change upon need of work.

**Church President:**  
John Pruss 715-292-4825

**Head Elder:**  
Darryl Warren 715-492-0488

**Website**  
[www.zionashland.org](http://www.zionashland.org)

**E-mail**  
[secretary@zionlutheranashland.com](mailto:secretary@zionlutheranashland.com)

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

**LFOJ Administrator:**  
715-682-6075



## PRAY LIST

**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:

Brad Prill  
Alice Balmer  
Penny Larson  
Vi Basina  
Dave Pearson  
James Fletcher  
Sheryl Hildebrandt  
Harold Larson  
Diane Beiersdorff  
Linda Stenroos  
Steve Key

Riley Bretting  
Cindy Lazorik  
Doug Preuter  
Mike Trimble  
Jamie Klema  
Mike Ariens  
Dwayne  
Carol Schuelke  
Molly Colgrove and daughter  
*and those in our hearts*

**PRAYERS for Homebound, Assisted Living, nursing home**  
Those who aren't able to attend common worship that they would find comfort knowing that the Lord is with them...  
*Arlene Zimmerman Violet Basina Alice Balmer*

**PRAYERS FOR PROTECTION**  
For our full-time troops and public servants, for travel, missionaries, and for peace and protection for families.  
*David Wright Jordan Thimm Andrew Pruss*

May 2, 2023

### Prayer For Health and Healing

Almighty God, you are the only source of health and healing. In You, there is calm and the only true peace in the universe. Grant to each of us an awareness of your presence, and give us perfect confidence in you. In all pain and weariness and anxiety,



## Start to Finish

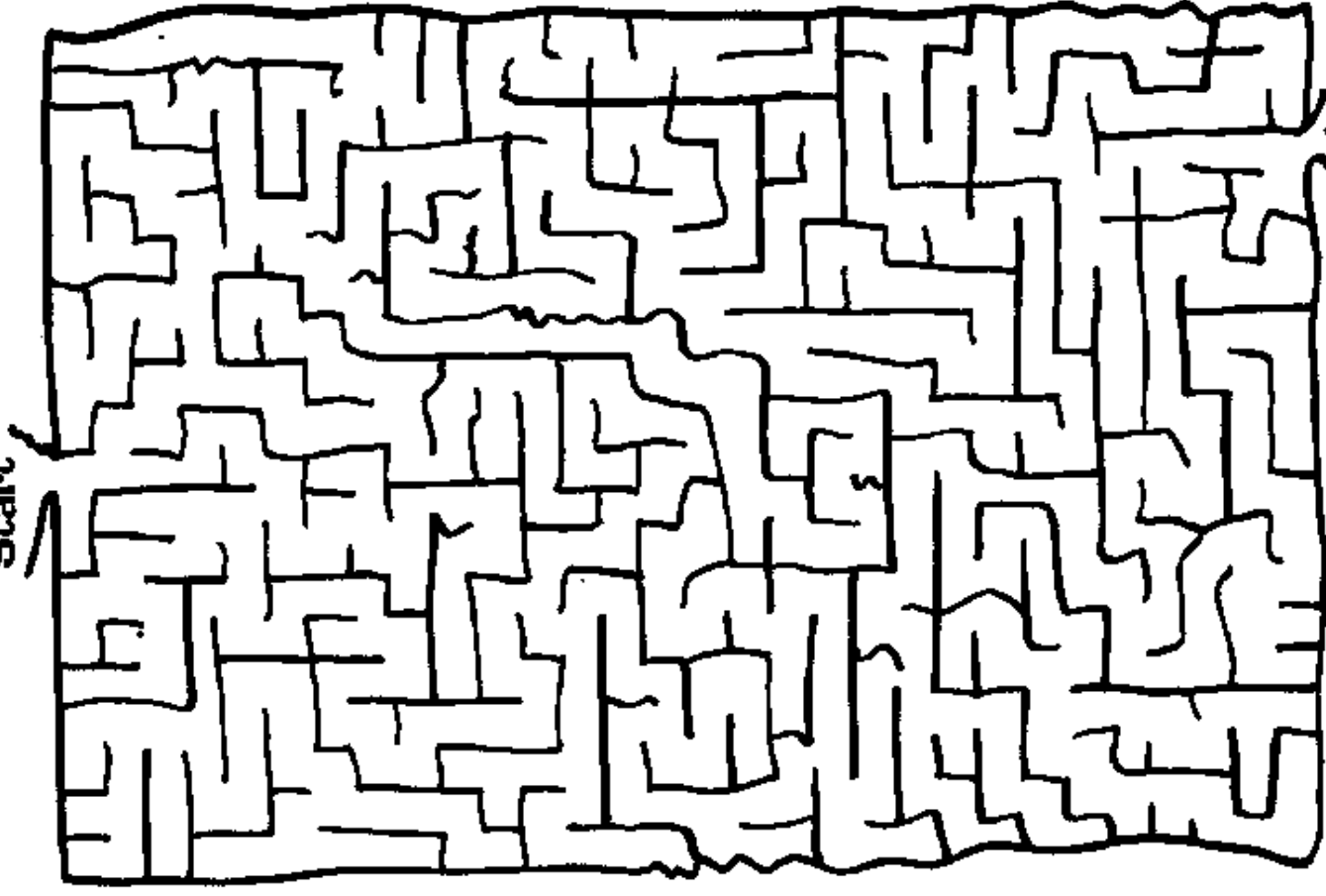
### Brain Teaser

**DIRECTIONS:** For each clue, find a corresponding word that starts and finishes with the same letter. There is one word for each letter of the alphabet except for i, j, q, u, v and z.

Spend time in front of the mirror.	PRIMP
Intuitive inking.	
Pioneer in photocopying.	
Bitterly sarcastic.	
Gas in some signs.	
Inuit transportation.	
Chinese medicinal root.	
Where a rubber duckie lives.	
Roll in the mud.	
Pleasure traveller.	
Temporary loss of memory.	
Deadly.	
Pizza herb.	
Very knowledgeable.	
Forty-eight hours before tomorrow.	
The most.	
Excessive.	
Feudal land.	
Trepidation	
Water storage area.	

This maze is hard ! Can you make it to the end?

Start

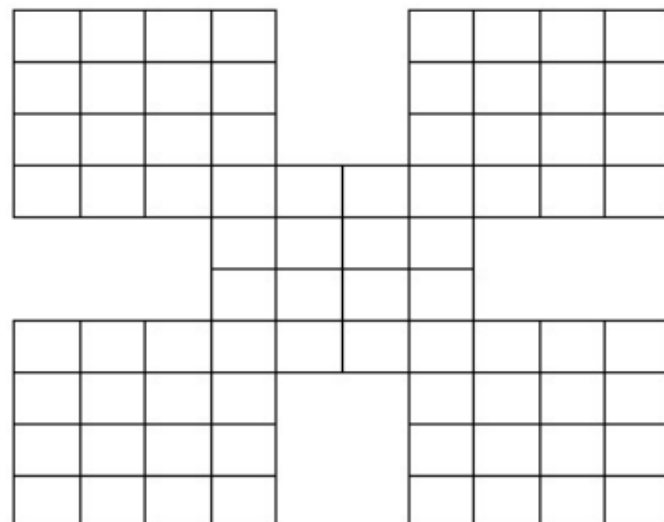


D Q C U P U R A L S P M C J T J L X S E  
 F P W P X Y O R N X T F C S B F S K M T  
 A Z I R N Q I R O O U Z J L N K I M Y W  
 D E C O Q S V O W Q F A I T H F U L R P  
 F N C M P O A G S P N N F Z S M Y L N R  
 E H A I Q E S A F I D W H R A F T X A G  
 Z B R S D W A N T E D A O G Q R W N U R  
 T I I E N O K C D B L R R R M U A J E Q  
 T X T S Z B A E P L J E A A C I N M G K  
 Z J A Q C J H L E R P A C S S T O G C F  
 E G Y E K T Y U T W I S E L F D L R O T  
 X O H L U V J F B F M D Y G E T A R T S  
 V L T R I A A Y S Z O K E L T S A K L X  
 K O T R H Q W M U V D R S F C Y E N K E  
 D Y V D N I S C S B P E B O K R K V E Z  
 S E H C R U H C E T Y D I I Q D H S E F  
 Q V R H A G Q Y H E A T C T D I O X J N  
 Y B O B E H P B P M E K A V A D K J I N  
 G E C J L W F I E O N O I T A L E V E R  
 P H I L A D E L P H I A O T L M Z N B O

### The Seven Churches of Revelation

ARROGANCE  
 BLINDED  
 CHURCHES  
 CROWN  
 EPHESUS  
 EYES  
 FAITHFUL  
 FORBIDDEN  
 FRUIT  
 HALLEUJAH  
 KEY  
 LAODICEA  
 LEARN  
 PERGAMUM  
 PHILADELPHIA  
 PRIDE  
 PROMISES  
 REMODEL  
 REVELATION  
 SARDIS  
 SAVIOR  
 SEE  
 SELF  
 SEVEN  
 SMYRNA  
 SPIRIT  
 STRATEGY  
 THYATIRA  
 TRUTH

**Connected Squares:** This puzzle is similar to a crossword puzzle, except that each of the four square areas reads the same horizontally and vertically.



**UPPERLEFT:** 1. Frozen vapor.  
 2. Fastidious. 3. Prefix meaning eight.  
 4. To carry as covering.  
**UPPER RIGHT:** 1. To take notice of.  
 2. To covet. 3. Equal. 4. A unit of force in the centimeter-gram-second system.  
**CENTER:** 1. To observe printed matter.  
 2. Always. 3. Prefix meaning pertaining to air. 4. To let fall.  
**LOWER LEFT:** 1. We motor on it.  
 2. A boy's name. 3. An article of matter.  
 4. Hemispherical roof.  
**LOWER RIGHT:** 1. To empty. 2. A vegetable. 3. Vessels. 4. A breaking out of the skin.

### "My Faith Looks Up to Thee"

Ray Palmer is often considered to be one of America's best nineteenth-century hymn writers. After completing grammar school he worked in a Boston dry goods store, but a religious awakening prodded him to study for the ministry. He attended Yale College (supporting himself by teaching) and was ordained in 1835. A pastor in Congregational churches in Bath, Maine (1835-1850), and Albany, New York (1850-1865), he also served as secretary of the American Congregational Union (1865-1878). Palmer was a popular preacher and author, writing original poetry as well as translating hymns. He published several volumes of poetry and hymns, including Sabbath Hymn Book (1858), Hymns and Sacred Pieces (1865), and Hymns of My Holy Hours (1868). His complete poetical works were published in 1876.

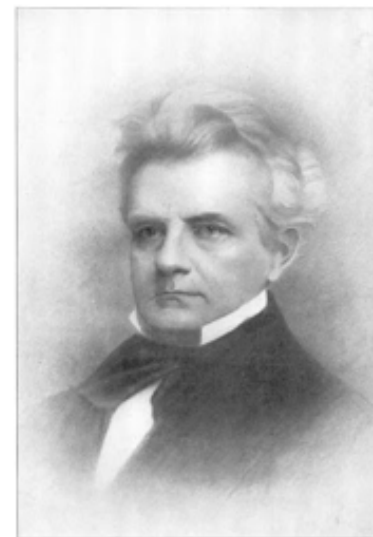


Palmer, Ray, D.D., son of the Hon. Thomas Palmer, a Judge in Rhode Island, was born at Little Compton, Rhode Island, Nov. 12, 1808. His early life was spent at Boston, where he was for some time clerk in a dry-goods store. At Boston he joined the Park Street Congregational Church, then under the pastoral care of Dr. S. E. Dwight. After spending three years at Phillips Academy, Andover, he entered Yale College, New Haven, where he graduated in 1830. In 1835 he became pastor of the Central Congregational Church, Bath, Maine. During his pastorate there he visited Europe in 1847. In 1850 he was appointed to the First Congregational Church, at Albany, New York, and in 1865 Corresponding Secretary to the American Congregational Union, New York. He resigned in 1878, and retired to Newark, New Jersey. He died at Newark, Mar. 29, 1887.

Most of Dr. Palmer's hymns have passed into congregational use, and have won great acceptance. The best of them by their combination of thought, poetry, and devotion, are superior to almost all others of American origin. The first which he wrote has become the most widely known of all. It is:—

My faith looks up to Thee. Faith in Christ. This hymn was written by the author when fresh from College, and during an engagement in teaching in New York. This was in 1830. The author says concerning its composition, "I gave form to what I felt, by writing, with little effort, the stanzas. I recollect I wrote them with very tender emotion and ended the last line with tears."

### Lowell Mason (1792-1872)



Lowell Mason, noted composer of sacred music, was organist of the Independent Presbyterian Church (1820-1827), and Superintendent of its Sunday School (1815- 1827). A native of New England, Mason moved to Savannah at the age of twenty. He resided in this city for approximately fifteen years until his return to Massachusetts in 1827. He was active in the civic and religious life of his adopted city. He served as Secretary of the Savannah Missionary Society; was an active organizer of a school for the instruction of sacred music, and was Superintendent of the inter-denominational Savannah Sabbath School.

While Mason was the organist of the Independent Presbyterian Church, he set to music Bishop Reginald Heber's hymn, "From Greenland's Icy Mountains." In the church that then stood on this site the now famous hymn was sung in 1824 for the first time.

[From Greenland's Icy Mountains." In our hymnal is #835 "On Galilee's High Mountain. There are seven other hymns in our hymnal that have his tunes]

Among later well known compositions by Mason was the music for the great hymns, "My Faith Looks Up to Thee" and "Nearer, My God, to Thee."

**Join our Service Team**

Years back when there were lots of buffets, did you ever eat at one and too many of the bowls were empty? Then you looked for the people who should be refilling the empty dishes, only to find out there is only one person doing it, while there should be three or more.

A few years back, Zion had a wonderful kitchen committee that prepared food and served for funerals and other occasions. The number of these volunteer ladies started to dwindle without new ones coming aboard. They had to make the disheartening decision to end this service.

We are bringing back this team of helpful people with fewer expectations. We have been having a few funerals lately and our member's family would like a luncheon to be served. The family knows they need to have the meal catered. That is a big part of the luncheon that Zion doesn't have to deal with now. One other item lacking is that the caterers don't always have people to help serve the food. So, who does it? The family? No, because members of Zion want to help out so the family doesn't have worry about that. Right? Right!

**What does this entail?**

- 3-5 people to arrive about one hour before the luncheon would start,
- Check the food tables that all condiments, utensils, etc. are provided.
- Refill food items when needed.
- Clear the items, pack up leftovers for the family
- Wipe down tables
- Caterers will be responsible for bringing and picking up their serving containers, food, etc.*
- Interested? GREAT! Send a reply to this email with your name, phone # and email address to the church or drop of the info in the church office. Someone will be in touch with you.
- Questions? Call the office, 715-682-6075 or speak with Jule Jarvela
- Thank you.



(Cont. from previous page)

Those words hit me like a thunderbolt from heaven. For the first time in my life I realized from the combination of the words from that song and the fire of the Holy Spirit coursing through my body that I had been trying to know God merely on an intellectual basis and that by definition, I could never hope to know the depth of the mind of my Creator. I had not realized the role of FAITH and TRUST in a good God, thinking that belief was some kind of intellectual activity and accomplishment of getting all the facts straight. That challenge of experiencing the certain hope of God's promises BY FAITH sparked a question in my head, "What if I really DO believe?" and from there, over days and months, that tiny spark of faith grew and became an avalanche of conviction by the power and grace of God not only in Jesus, but in the trustworthiness of the Bible in all its parts.

It was such a pivotal event, I've likened it to Paul's Damascus road experience or Luther's experience in a lightning storm and His own thunderbolt experience reading in Romans that "the just person lives BY FAITH." I think some of us are just more stubborn, not more special, and that God literally has to shake us up and put us on fire in order to get through to us. And of course, I invited Conley to my service of ordination who once again graced me with his presence!

**What a Bird!**

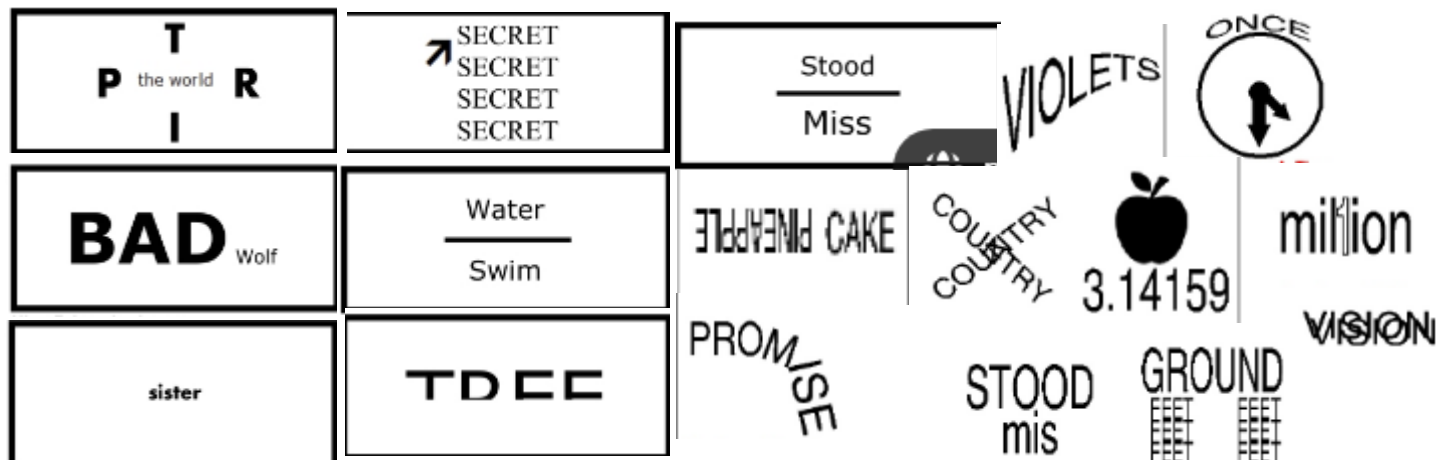
For her birthday, Mrs. S. received a handsome yellow and green parrot, and she was delighted. She spent the better part of several weeks trying to teach the bird a few phrases, but all she could get it to say was, "Who is it?" One day the faucet in her bathroom developed a bad leak. She phoned a plumber who informed her that he would be there shortly. Being a hospitable person, Mrs. S. thought that she should have something to serve the man when he came. Coffee perhaps? But when she checked her pantry, she discovered that she was out of coffee. "I'll just be gone a moment," she said as she put on her coat and left to go to the supermarket.



But in the meantime the plumber came and rang the bell. The parrot answered the ring: "Who is it?" and the workman answered, "It's the plumber." Again the parrot said, "Who is it?", and the plumber raised his voice a bit, "It's the plumber." The only response from inside the house was the parrot's repeated "Who is it?" The plumber was getting frustrated: "IT'S THE PLUMBER!", he shouted, but again he heard the maddening question: "Who is it?" Now he was really in a frenzy, screaming, "IT'S THE PLUMBER!!!" And the poor man had a heart attack and died. A few minutes later Mrs. S. came home and gasped when she saw the dead man sprawled on her stoop. "Oh dear," she cried, "Who is it?" To which the bird replied, "It's the plumber."

**Happy Mother's Day**

to ALL the MOTHERS out there whether you are a Past, Present or Soon To be Moms. May your day be filled with love, joy and laughter..



## Faith Struggle, a Synopsis of a Journey

by Rev. Michael Zehnder, Music Director, Ascension Lutheran Church, Littleton, CO

As a young child I was a strong believer in God and in Jesus Christ, my Savior. I was confirmed in the eighth grade and learned my catechism well, believing the more I understood intellectually, the better a Christian I was. I had no doubts. But doubts started in early high school when I was taught evolutionary theory as the answer to the existence of the universe and was told that the world was not created in six days as stated in the first chapters of Genesis. My instructors said that the universe began with a massive explosion called the Big Bang at least 13 billion years ago and that man evolved over time from lower life forms all directed by "mother nature."

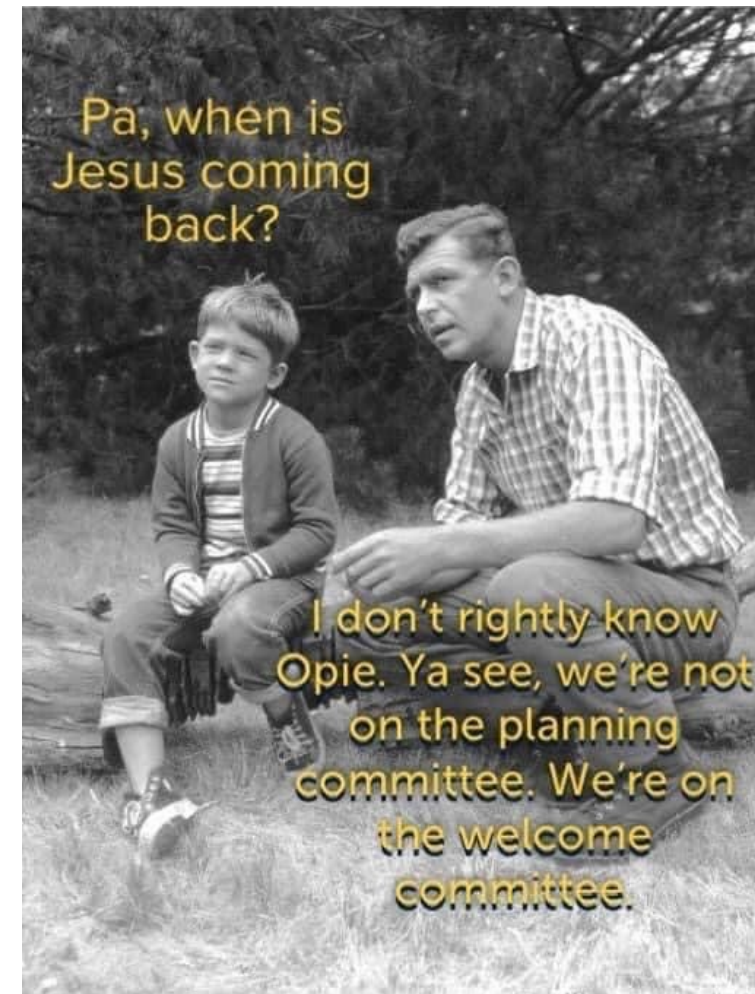
Considering myself an intellectual I began to view the Bible as a collection of myths and contradictions and thought it my job to sort out what was real and what was made up. At age 14 I took a list of what I saw as contradictions in the Bible to my father who was also my pastor. The timing was bad as he was trying to watch a game on the TV and after about just 10 minutes he said in frustration, "You don't believe? Well, you better just START believing!" as he pounded the table. That unhelpful advice really just sent me into a tailspin of doubt which increased each year until I found myself enrolled in a Christian college of my parents' choice at age 17.

I was the only unbeliever at St John's College in Winfield, KS and was very vocal about it. The other students sort of took me on as their missionary project and I was in daily discussions with earnest faith-filled students whom I considered brainwashed and duped into believing by well-meaning parents and mentors.

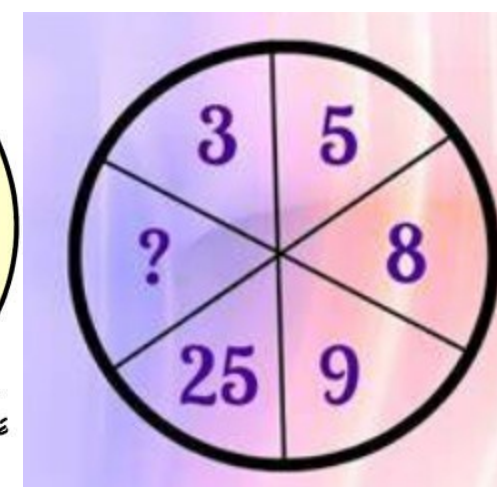
One day I was having a discussion with a strong believer named Conley on a sidewalk in front of Baden Hall. He said to me, "Michael, you say you don't believe but I've never met anyone who talks more about God than you." I responded, "that's because all of you are all so brainwashed and I'm trying to help you see that you are wasting your lives by believing these myths when you could be free-thinkers and having a good time." He said, "I don't think so. I believe that the Holy Spirit has one foot in the door of your heart and He's trying like crazy to get in the rest of the way."

I immediately shook my head and responded with "No" but as I did so I felt something start at the top of my head that was similar to the feeling of the tingling of a foot when it falls asleep. I felt this strange sensation begin to grow throughout my scalp. It became much bigger and moved down through my shoulders and quickly through my entire body. Even my legs and feet were tingling. It felt like I was on fire and I couldn't speak anymore, so I ran quickly away thinking I was having a medical emergency. As I did, I passed the chapel on campus where the students were singing "He's everything to me." They had just come to the line which states, "Till BY FAITH I met him face to face, and I felt the wonder of His grace, then I knew that He was more than just a God a way up there, who really didn't care and now He walks beside me day by day helping me to find the narrow way..."

(Cont, on next page)



May today there be peace within.  
May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.  
May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.  
May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you  
May you be confident knowing you are a child of God.  
Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love.  
It is there for each and every one of us.



Monday = 617  
Tuesday = 729  
Wednesday = 9312  
Thursday = 8412  
Friday = 6511  
Saturday = 8614  
Sunday = ????

Miracles serve as a reminder of the Lord's presence and care for His people. Through the miracles that occur in our lives, we are reminded that God is still with us and working for our good. Whether it is healing from an illness, a chance encounter that changes the course of our lives, a moment of profound spiritual insight, or a reappearance of nature, miracles can be a powerful source of faith and hope.



### European Bison

This little girl redefined what it means to be a millennial. For the first time in over 6,000 years, a wild European bison (or wisent) was born in England. The species was hunted to near extinction by World War I, surviving only in zoos. The Kent team, like those around the continent, are reintroducing these woodland bison as "ecosystem engineers" that benefit everything in their habit. But bison can hide pregnancies to protect them from predators, and one of the introduced females was carrying a surprise. The birth of the female calf in September was a cherry on top of the re-emerging bison success.

### Greenback Cutthroat Trout

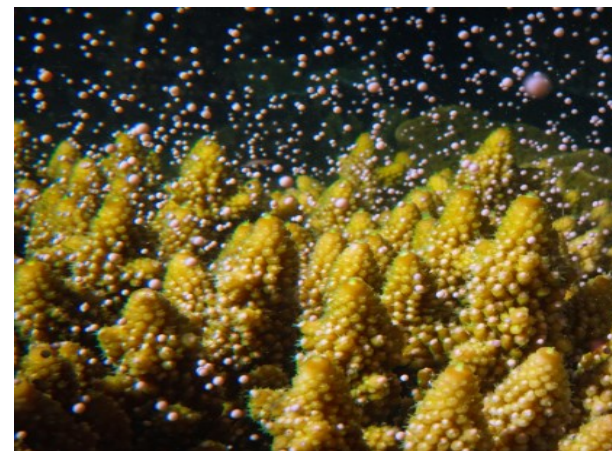
Colorado's state trout are back making babies in their native rivers. In September, scientists announced that the species, once considered utterly extinct in the 1930s, was not only breeding but doing so on its own.



It's been a dramatic turn for the greenback, thought to be back in the 1950s, only for scientists to determine the fish were a similar subspecies, but not the greenback cutthroats. But in 2012, naturalists found the world's only purebred greenback trout hover in Bear Creek. Aquatic biologists carefully managed this discovery, and after years in the hatchery and reintroduction to the rivers, these trout are holding their own.

### Spawning Coral

Coral is popping up everywhere, and even out of season. For the first time, scientists in Australia have spawned coral in captivity during the off-season, replicating the summer moon, tides, and temperatures ideal for creation in a laboratory to then plant on the reefs. Typically, coral only spawns twice between October and December, and this winter success creates hope that they can regenerate and restore the Great Barrier Reef faster. The UNESCO heritage-listed reef is also battling back without lab support. Northern and central stretches of the 1429-mile-long reef showed the largest coral cover in the last 36 years.



### Flowering Desert

The stony terrain of this high-Andean plateau becomes a wonderfully weird carpet of pink and purple blossoms every five to seven years. Over 200 species of flowers unpredictably pop up in the driest place on earth when the conditions are just right, and scientists study the phenomenon to learn about survival in drought. This year, when Atacama had an even rarer winter bloom, the new Chilean president immediately moved to protect the region with national park status.

## Looking Back on Life

By Martin Luther (Faith Alone - 365 Devotional Readings)

*A person may plan his own journey, but the Lord directs his steps. Proverbs 16:9*

No one sees the hand of God working in his life more clearly than when he reflects back on the years of his life. Augustine said that if a person had a choice of either dying or reliving his life over again, he would certainly choose death because of all the danger and evil he so narrowly escaped. In one sense, this statement is certainly true.

Looking back, a person can see how much he has accomplished and suffered without trying or thinking about it, even against his wishes and will. He gave such little thought to what he was doing before it occurred or when it was happening. Now, after everything has been carried out, he is amazed and says, "Why did these things happen to me when I never thought about them or thought something completely different would happen. So Proverbs 16:9 is true, "A person may plan his own journey, but the Lord directs his steps," even against his plan and will. So we must agree that our own cleverness and foresight don't guide our life and actions. Instead, God's wonderful power, wisdom, and goodness guide us. Only when we look back do we fully recognize how often God was with us when we neither saw his hand nor felt his presence at the time it was happening. Accordingly, Peter said, "He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

Even if there were no books or sermons to tell us about God, simply looking back on our own lives would prove that he tenderly carries us in his arms. When we look back on how God had led and brought us through so much evil, adversity, and danger, we can clearly see the ever-present goodness of God, which is far above our thoughts, mind, and perceptions.

### 2023 SUMMER VBS

**August 7th - 11th**  
**9:00am - 3:00pm**

We're hoping to offer VBS at the end of summer. Camp Luther is no longer doing Church On-site VBS. We have some great choices of what the theme will be for this summer. We will have a "leaders' guide" for each section of the day, which includes:

Opening Games	Bible Adventures Crafts	Imagination Station Closing	Lunch/Snack
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Will **you** help us make this a reality? We need volunteers to take on some of these duties. You could choose to work 9-12 or 12-3, all day, every day, 3-5 days. We hope to fill each day with loads of fun and learning about Jesus. We have one volunteer so far, and she is taking a week's vacation to help out. Check out your summer calendar and see if you could be one of these super volunteers helping us have a successful summer VBS for the kids. Once you know that you are available, let the office know so we can add you to the list.