

Zion Messenger

A Monthly Publication of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church--Elgin, ND

Volume 35, Number 11

*Phone: 584-2902 * Email: zelc@westriv.com *

December 2023

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

As we begin this time of Advent, we begin a time of waiting. We wait for so many things in our lives. I know it can be difficult, especially when the outcome involves the loss of a loved one. One might think, as Christians, we would be happy and celebrating them being at peace and healed from any ailments they had here on earth.



When we grieve, most often, we are grieving our loss of that person. We miss them, and it hurts. Perhaps they were part of our support group or part of our family. Maybe they were one of the few people, outside of our family, who called us. There are people who have a positive affect on our lives - do we remember to appreciate them while they are with us? Do we let them know how important they are to us?

Too often in life, people are not told that they are appreciated. I have often heard regrets at visitations and funerals. "I wished that I had told them..." "I always meant to tell them..." "The last thing I said to them was in anger." Unfortunately, when we put off saying the things we need to tell someone, we can miss our opportunity to do so.

When I tell you that it is important to forgive one another, this passage comes to mind:

Concerning Anger

²¹ "You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder,' and 'whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.' ²² But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment, and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council, and if you say, 'You fool,' you will be liable to the hell of fire. ²³ So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there

before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵ Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. ²⁶ Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny." (Matthew 5:21-26)

It can only hurt us when we allow conflicts to fester within us. There are times when talking with the other party is not a good move. It can make things worse, or they are deceased. In those instances, I have written them a letter, never intending to send it to them. I write it honestly, and when I am finished, I take it outside and burn it. I have also prayed for individuals until they are no longer living rent-free in my head. There are ways to be free even if we cannot talk to those who have hurt us.

It is pretty obvious to me that Jesus wants us to be happy, no matter what is going on around us. He wanted us to place our trust in Him so we could live full lives. This is why Jesus taught us how to live differently while we are in this world. His radical

(continued on page 3)

**Advent and Christmas
Worship Schedule**

Wednesdays, December 6, 13, and 20
5:30 Supper
6:30 Worship

Sunday, December 17
9:30 Worship with Christmas Program

Sunday, December 24, Christmas Eve
9:30 Worship
5:00 Candlelight Service

WELCA News

Serving - Group 2 serves next.

Activity (Serving) Book Update - We are updating altar guild and serving groups for next year. If your availability or contact information has changed, please let Doris Friedt know by **Wednesday, December 6**. She can be reached at 584-3726.

Buy Your Christmas Cards from WELCA!

We have a nice selection of beautiful Christmas cards for sale on the library table. Boxed cards have the price stickers; individual cards are only 50 cents each. Make your choice, then just drop your total payment into the drop box in the library.

JMCC Birthday Party - On Sunday, December 17, at 2:30 pm, WELCA will be hosting the monthly birthday party for Care Center residents.

Next Meeting - Thursday, December 7, at 1:30 pm

Christmas Gift Ideas

WELCA has a variety of items that make great Christmas gifts and stocking stuffers:

Rada Cutlery

- Gift sets of steak knives
- Pizza cutters
- Knives
- Serving utensils



Church cookbooks

Embroidered dish towels
(sets and individual
towels available)

Assorted Boxed Greeting Cards

Coffee (available at Joleen's Hair Care)

If you'd rather order Rada from the comfort of your home, go to <https://radafundraising.com/?rfsn=1299438.7623e>. You can have items delivered to your home or to a gift recipient.

*The Lord is coming, always coming. ...
Life is Advent;
life is recognizing the coming of the Lord.*
Henri Nouwen

Identification statement: Zion Messenger,
A Church Newsletter Published Monthly
December 2023
Contents not necessarily views of
Zion ELC or members.
Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church
400 2nd AVE NE
Elgin ND 58533

Remembering Our Shut-Ins

Pastor Mike, in his message last Sunday (watch the 11/26/23 message on Zion's Facebook page if you missed worship), reminded us that Martin Luther gave laypersons and clergy equal rights and responsibilities. There is no spiritual divide between priests and laity; there is simply "one estate" to which all baptized believers belong. (1 Peter 2:9) With this in mind, we are asking our members to reach out to our members who are unable to get out. Let us share the love of Christ with them this Christmas season.

Below is a list of our shut-in members. Visit them. Pray for them. Send them a card. Call them. Live into the role of the priesthood.

Gen Bruhn
Byris Haslid
Reiny Zacher

Jacobson Mem Care Center
601 East St N
Elgin ND 58533

Cathy Eslinger
Dale Lingert
Leona Rauscher
Leona Stern

Dakota Hill Housing
606 Dakota St N
Elgin ND 58533

Alta Eslinger

St. Benedicts Health Center
851 4th Ave E
Dickinson ND 58601

Arlene Kinder

Baptist Health Care Center
3400 Nebraska Dr
Bismarck ND 58503

Julia Wutzke

Augusta Place
301 Lorrain Dr, Rm 157
Bismarck ND 58503

Helena Roth

604 E Ash Ave
Glen Ullin ND 58631

Winifred Kramer

4580 Coleman St, Apt 1130
Bismarck ND 58503

Half-Price before Christmas Day!?!

The 2024 Summer Camp Programs are set at [Camp of the Cross \(COTC\)](#). And if you register by Christmas Day, the early bird registration fee is half price!

Zion will pay for confirmation students to attend Bible camp; WELCA pays one-third of the registration fee for others attending camp. It can be at Camp of the Cross or another camp approved by the pastor. Don't miss this great deal on loads of fun and learning at Camp!

Offerings & Gifts - November		
	Undesignated	Attendance
November 5	\$2,076	84
November 12	2,130	90
November 19	1,570	88
November 26	1,234	55
Total Undesignated	\$7,010	Avg Sun Attend: 79
Bulletins	60	
Parish Ed Fund	300	
Miscellaneous	894	
Organ Fund	26	
Sunday School	12	Avg SS Attend:
Income & Expenses - Year to Date		
Income	Undesignated	Other
\$115,400	\$112,300	\$3,100
Expenses	Budgeted	Designated Funds
119,093	116,738	2,355
Income vs Expense		
-3,693		

Pastor's Message

(continued from page 1)

way of living can disconnect us from the things that hold us back. Jesus wants us to be free from the worries of this world. He taught us about the love of God the Father, for God's Son, and for all of God's beloved children.

⁹ "I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." (John 10:9,10).

Jesus is our Shephard, our protector, and our guide. When we do our best to follow His teachings, we can't fail. Jesus wants us to lean on Him and to call upon Him for strength and guidance. Don't hesitate to ask for His help. We cannot make it on our own; if we could, Jesus would not have needed to come to earth. God knew the best way for humanity to thrive in this world and how to prepare for what is to come. Jesus taught us everything we needed to know, and then the Father sent the Spirit to remind the apostles what Jesus taught them.

¹⁵ "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. ¹⁷ This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him because he abides with you, and he will be in you. ¹⁸ "I will not leave you orphaned;" (John 14:15-18a)

The Spirit is at work in our lives. Ask for its guidance. Jesus did not set us up to fail. He has given us everything we need to succeed—succeed in God's eyes, not the world's eyes. We have been given what we need to follow Jesus to our eternal home, where we belong. Build your relationship with God, talk with Him (Pray). Place your hope and trust in God (Faith). God will not fail us. Call upon Him for what we need, for what to do, and for how best to love one another.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Michael S. Harrison

Pastor Mike Wants Your Input ...

In preparation for having Bible study, please give feedback to Pastor Mike or Virginia if you are interested and whether a daytime or an evening Bible study works best for your schedule.

Wednesday Advent Worship Begins Dec 6

Each Wednesday during Advent, beginning December 6, we will be having supper of soup, bread, and bars at 5:30 followed by worship at 6:30.

During Advent, many churches and families use wreaths to symbolize watchfulness and increasing joy as Christmas approaches. Colors for the candles vary, with some traditions using blue (for hope or creation) and others preferring purple (for royalty, humility or penitence).

The four candles, which each represents a week in Advent, signify hope, peace, joy and love. (The third candle is often pink.) In the center is the white Christ candle, representing Jesus as the light of the world. This candle is lit on Christmas Eve and/or Christmas Day, depending on which days it falls.

The round, green Advent wreath has special meaning of its own. It symbolizes eternal life and the unending love of God, who sent his only Son to earth to die in our place.



FIVE GIFTS OF DISCIPLESHIP ... *during Advent and Christmas*

Advent and Christmas are ideal seasons of the church year to emphasize LIVING OUR BAPTISM and to discover the five gifts of discipleship. Gifts! Gifts! Gifts! Gift-giving and gift-receiving dominate today's Advent and Christmas seasons. Millions of dollars are spent in advertising to convince us to purchase the perfect gift to ensure perfect holidays and happiness.

This Advent and Christmas, you are invited to prayerfully ponder the story of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and how her song inspires faithful discipleship.

Mary's Song—God's Gift to the World

There once was a young woman named Mary who found favor with God. The angel Gabriel was sent by God to deliver a message to this favored one:

"Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you...Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." (Luke 1:28, 30-33 NRSV)

Her cousin Elizabeth confirmed the truth, *"Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb... And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."* (Luke 1:42, 45 NRSV) Talk about a world turned upside down!

During Advent, discover the gifts of discipleship:

ADVENT 1: Live among God's faithful people

Each day this week, read Mary's Song—The Magnificat. Pray.

Reflect: *How can I encourage others in their faith?*

ADVENT 2: Hear the Word of God and share in the Lord's supper

Each day this week, read Mary's Song—the Magnificat. Pray. Make plans to spend time with those who are lonely at the holidays.

Reflect: *How does (or might) my soul magnify the Lord?*

ADVENT 3: Proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed

Each day this week, read Mary's Song—The Magnificat. Prayerfully consider lifestyle changes which might translate into a more positive reflection of your faith.

Reflect: *How does Christmas draw me closer to Christ?*

ADVENT 4: Serve all people, following the example of Jesus

Each day this week, read Mary's Song—the Magnificat. Pray. Invite others. Make plans to fill the hungry with good things.

Reflect: *How might I share with those in need?*

CHRISTMAS: Strive for justice and peace in all the earth

Each day during the 12 days of Christmas, listen to a musical version of Mary's Song—the Magnificat. Focus on the theme of justice in her story. Ponder and name injustices in your local community. Select one area of justice to lend your voice in the coming year.

Reflect: *How might I lend my voice to bring justice?*

Mary's Song—The Magnificat

And Mary said,
"My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices
in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor
on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will
call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done
great things for me, and holy is
his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him from
generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in
the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down
the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with
good things, and sent the rich
away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he
made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants
forever."

Luke 1:46-55 NRSV

**Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church
Council Meeting
November 12, 2023**

Present: Bridget Winkler, Kayedenn Rivinius, Tabitha Zimmerman, Sydney Richardson, Steph Lince, Doug Rivinius, Ronae Hochhalter, Jim Zimmerman, Pastor Mike HarriSon, Kenny Friedt, Virginia Rivinius. Absent: Brandy Fuchs, Terry Bentz.

Meeting called to order by Steph with a prayer.

Secretary's Report was reviewed individually. Motion made by Tabitha to approve as presented, seconded by Kayedenn. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report reviewed, discussion held on benevolence disbursement to Dakota Hills and Care Center. No one is aware of specific project at either location. Will do one this month and one next month to be used as needed. Discussion held on money in Cemetery savings account, no immediate expenses known for this winter. It was moved by Doug to put \$5000.00 from Cemetery savings account into a 6-month CD. Motion seconded by Ronae. Motion Carried. It was moved by Kenny and seconded by Tabitha/Jim to approve the Treasurer's Report. Motion carried.

Pastor's Report was verbally given, have 5 signed up for First Communion class that started this morning, also looking at doing Advent Wednesday evening services like the Lenten services.

Committee Reports:

1. **Constitution & Bylaws** – heard back from Murray, synod attorney; there were some minor wording changes he recommended. Motion made by Bridget to make the changes suggested and present to the congregation at the annual meeting, seconded by Tabitha/Doug; motion carried.
2. **Mission Endowment Fund** – It was motioned by Doug and seconded by Kayedenn to payout \$1250.00 for last quarter to Lutheran Disaster. It was discussed in October, but no motion was made. Next quarter's disbursement ideas also discussed.
3. **Parish Education** – None.
4. **Property** – clean up day held (in October), not all projects completed due to lack of volunteers.

Old Business:

1. **Follow up on property insurance deductible** - is \$2500 for all, except wind/hail deductible is \$27,000. Cost is \$7273 annually. Discussion held on getting some quotes with other companies.

New Business:

1. **Review of Groundskeeping and Snow Removal contracts** – discussion held on including cost of spring/fall cleanup cost in bid so we are able to budget for it; Council felt this would be appropriate.
2. **Advent and Christmas**
 - a. Advent Worship on Wednesdays will start on December 6th at 6p with a light supper and then a service at 7p. Will put a sign up out for meals.
 - b. Christmas Eve (Sunday) and Christmas Day (Monday) worship times – discussion held on whether to hold regular 930 service in addition to a candlelight service Sunday evening and Monday. Decided to ask congregation to see what they may want.
 - c. Treat bags for Sunday School kids – motioned by Doug and seconded by Ronae to allow \$300 for supplies for treat bags. Patty Zimmerman will gather items.
 - d. Set up Nativity Scene – several council members volunteered to take care of the set up before Advent begins.
3. **Bethesda United Methodist Church is closing.** Discussion was held on sending a letter to member to invite them to our church. Will work on getting a list of current members.

Other Business

1. WELCA is replacing 3 faucets, 1 in each bathroom and the Sacristy.
2. Discussion held on clean-up of membership list.
3. AED donated by JDA, needs supplies and the box needs to be mounted. It was motioned by Doug and seconded by Bridget to purchase needed supplies and mount the box where it is easily seen and accessible. Motion Carried.

It was motioned by Doug and seconded by Kenny to adjourn the meeting. Motion Carried.

Bridget Winkler
Council Secretary



A Christmas Prayer for You



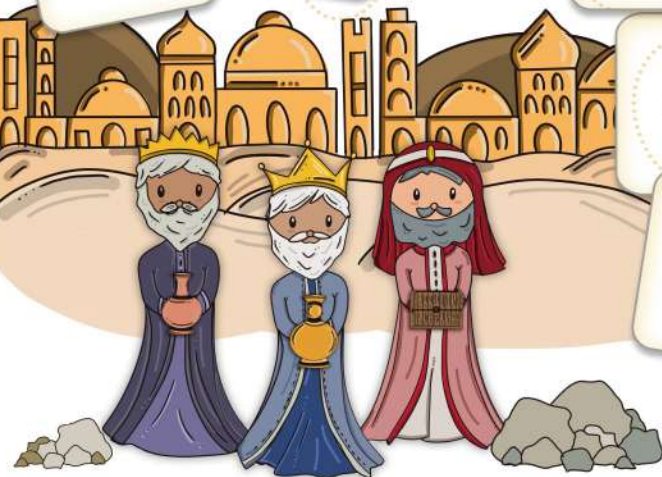
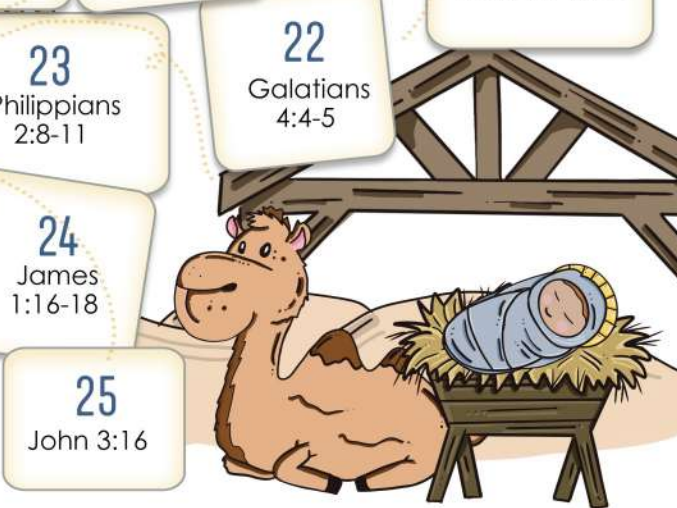
God grant you the light in Christmas, which is faith;
the warmth of Christmas, which is love;
the radiance of Christmas, which is purity;
the righteousness of Christmas, which is justice;
the belief in Christmas, which is truth;
the all of Christmas, which is Christ.

~ Wilda English



A CHRIST-CENTERED CHRISTMAS ADVENT READING PLAN

Explore the true meaning of Christmas as you travel through God's Word. Discover God's promises he fulfilled through the birth of His only Son, the **KING OF KINGS.**

1 Isaiah 7:14 	2 Isaiah 9:6-7	3 Malachi 3:1	4 Micah 5:2-4	5 Luke 1:5-7	6 Luke 1:10-15	7 Luke 1:18-22	8 Luke 1:24-25 
14 Luke 2:15-20	13 Luke 2:8-14	12 Luke 2:6-7	11 Luke 2:1-5	10 Luke 1:30-33	9 Luke 1:26-29	20 Matthew 2:10-12	21 Romans 15:13
15 Matthew 1:18-21	16 Matthew 1:22-25	17 Matthew 2:1-3	18 Matthew 2:4-6	19 Matthew 2:7-9	22 Galatians 4:4-5	23 Philippians 2:8-11	24 James 1:16-18
15 Matthew 1:18-21	16 Matthew 1:22-25	17 Matthew 2:1-3	18 Matthew 2:4-6	19 Matthew 2:7-9	22 Galatians 4:4-5	23 Philippians 2:8-11	24 James 1:16-18
25 John 3:16							

Abbreviations

- A - Acolyte
- AG - Altar Guild
- C - Communion
- L - Lector
- G - Greeter



December



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
<p><i>May God give you peace with yourselves; may he give you good will towards all your friends, your enemies, and your neighbors; and may he give you grace to give glory to God in the highest.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">~ Charles H. Spurgeon</p>						1	2 AG: Robin B Chris G
<p>9:30 Worship 10:30 S School / Confirmation / Worship Comm Meeting Fellowship</p> <p>A: Landon E L: Todd C: Kylor G: Ruby, Twyla</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Nicole B Delares S</p>	4 Carol H Otto R	5	6 5:30 Supper 6:30 Advent Worship 7:15 Mission Endowment Fund Comm Meeting	7 1:30 WELCA Meeting	8 Terrin F Trey H Wanda Z	9 AG: Nicole B Ashley L Marion C	
<p>9:30 Worship 10:30 S School / Confirmation / Council Meeting /</p> <p>A: Mykayla L: Joy C: Bridget G: Shelby, Jackie</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Colette W</p>	11 Clayton Z Marty & Kristin H	12	13 5:30 Supper 6:30 Advent Worship	14 1:30 Fellowship at Dakota Hill	15 Kenny & Doris F Laura Z	16 AG: Stephanie L Becky I	
<p>9:30 Worship w/ Christmas Program 10:30 Fellowship 2:30 WELCA at JMCC</p> <p>A: Zane L: Eric C: Jill G: Kenny & Doris</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Shelby S</p>	18	19	20 5:30 Supper 6:30 Advent Worship	21 	22	23 AG: Twyla S Sarah S Doris F	
<p>9:30 Worship 5:00 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Rick H</p>	25 <i>Merry Christmas!</i> A: Shaylee L: Patty C: Rosemary G: Jim & Patty	26	27	28	29	30 AG: Thelma H Joleen R	
<p>9:30 Worship 10:30 Confirmation / Fellowship</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Dorita H Aaron & Sara F</p>	31 A: Otto L: Kay C: Shayli G: Glenn & Kay Lucille N Cyndy Z			Doug R			