



Eye on Zion

A Quarterly Newsletter for the People of Zion Lutheran Church

February-March-April
2024

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Pastor Joel Pancoast

Pastor

Pastor Veronica Gould

Intern Pastor

Katie Elkin

Faith Formation Coordinators

Ronda Buck—Sunday School

Alyssa Hart—Young Adult / Nourish

Pam Stevens—Sacred Space

Director of Worship and Music

Noelle Bauman-Stucky

Organist / Praise Band Director

Neil Forsythe

Bell and Chimes Director

Thomas Chen

Accompanist / Collaborative Artist

Ryan Marvel

Office Manager

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Stig Oresjo

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Friendship

Pastor Veronica Gould

Have you ever thought of *friendship* as a spiritual practice?

I love the idea of friendship as a spiritual practice for two reasons: first, it emphasizes the role of the Spirit in forming and sustaining our relationships; second, it recognizes that friendship is not just something we have, but it is something that we *do*. Perhaps you've heard the proverb "to have a friend, you have to be a friend." Friendship is a commitment, and it takes quality time to build. But like all practices, we can only improve what we give our attention to.

From the beginning of our biblical witness, we hear the news that human beings are not meant to be alone. Yet we are in many ways socially recovering from the pandemic, rediscovering who we are and what our place is in our communities. Officials have referred to loneliness as a "public health crisis." Many of us know all too well what it feels like to be lonely or isolated. The answer to the question "What does it mean to be a friend?"

might look different in an age ruled by technology and social media, but the principles of caring and commitment are the same as when Jesus gave the mandate to love one another as he first loved us.

During Lent, we will gather on Wednesdays for dinner (5:00-5:45 p.m.), small groups (5:45-6:45 p.m.), and worship (6:45-7:15 p.m.), focusing on the important biblical theme of friendship. We will hear from members of our own community about what the gift of friendship has meant in their own lives: what it means to have a friend, to be a friend, and to experience God's call and presence in friendship. And we will have the opportunity to literally *practice* friendship in small groups, as we build new friendships and strengthen existing ones. If you know someone who would be blessed by a gathering like this, whether or not they are a part of our church community, I encourage you to invite them!

Continued on page 2.

Friendship continued from page 1.

We encourage you to come to as many of the midweek offerings as you are able, but we will also have opportunities to participate even when you are not able to attend. The themes of our gatherings will help us dive more deeply into the biblical value and spiritual practice of friendship. Come celebrate the gifts of friendship: commitment, support, compassion, encouragement, and sacrifice.

| | | |
|-------------|---------------|---------------------|
| February 21 | Commitment | Ruth 1:1-18 |
| February 28 | Support | Ecclesiastes 4:1-12 |
| March 6 | Compassion | Job 2:11-13, 16:1-7 |
| March 13 | Encouragement | Ephesians 4:25-31 |
| March 20 | Sacrifice | John 15:12-17 |

Special Small Group for Children

This year, we have a special small group for children. Elementary students are invited to join Noelle in preparing for a mini-musical telling the story of Holy Week.

The musical will be presented March 20 at 5:30 p.m.

Blessings on your Lenten Journey.

Sunday Lent and Holy Week Worship

Pastor Joel Pancoast

Wandering Heart—Figuring out faith with Peter

During Sundays of Lent and Holy Week, worship will focus our thoughts on the life and faith of one of Jesus' most well known disciples. In Peter, we see a person who is both steadfast and unsteady, a dear friend and a betrayer, a follower and a wanderer. Peter makes missteps and mistakes, but keeps searching and yearning and loving as he recognizes the one whose love has searched him, known him,

and loved him. As we grow in friendship with Peter this Lent, we will often see ourselves. As we follow Peter's journey, the story of Jesus will unfold through the eyes of a very normal person just trying to figure it all out...just like us. And in our own missteps and mistakes, our wandering hearts will encounter Jesus in worship.



For some, the themes for worship might sound familiar. They come from the well known hymn "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing." As we move through the Lenten season, you may feel as if

Continued on page 3.

Wandering Heart—Figuring out Faith with Peter continued from page 2.

Peter himself wrote this song! As we follow Peter's story, we will sing our way through Lent, binding our wandering hearts to God as both our friend and our savior. Faith is a journey that ebbs and flows, seeks and wanders. That wandering is exploration, but not distance from God because God's presence is a constant even when we don't feel it or recognize it. As we wander, let us tune our hearts to sing God's grace.

Sunday Lent and Holy Week Worship Themes and Icons

| | | | | |
|-------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| February 14 | Ash Wednesday* | "Tune My Heart" Psalm 51:1-17 |  | Tuning Fork |
| February 18 | First Sunday in Lent | "Jesus Sought Me" Luke 5:1-11; Psalm 25:1-10 |  | Fish |
| February 25 | Second Sunday in Lent | "Rescue Me From Danger" Matthew 14:22-33; Psalm 22:23-31 |  | Choppy Water |
| March 3 | Third Sunday in Lent | "Praise the Mount" Matthew 16:13-20; Psalm 19 |  | Mountain Peak |
| March 10 | Fourth Sunday in Lent | "I'm Fixed Upon It" Matthew 16:21-23; Psalm 107:1-3,17-22) |  | Fermata (prolonged note or a pause) |
| March 17 | Fifth Sunday in Lent | "Teach Me" Matthew 18:15-22; Psalm 119:9-16 |  | Open Book |
| March 24 | Palm Sunday | "Songs of Loudest Praise" John 12:12-16 |  | Music Note with Crescendo |
| March 28 | Maundy Thursday* | "Streams of Mercy" John 13:1-20 |  | Water Jar and Basin |
| March 29 | Good Friday* | "Prone to Leave the God I Love" John 13:31-38; John 18:1-27; John 19:1-30 |  | Rooster Crowing |
| March 31 | Easter Sunday | "And I Hope" Luke 24:1-12 |  | Sunrise |
| April 7 | Second Sunday of Easter | "Here's My Heart" John 21:1-19 |  | Heart |

* NOTE: THE EVENING WORSHIP FOR ASH WEDNESDAY, MAUNDY THURSDAY, AND GOOD FRIDAY WILL BE AT 6:00 P.M. THIS IS AN EARLIER TIME THAN PREVIOUS YEARS.

Come, Thou Fount of every blessing; tune my heart to sing Thy grace

SUBMISSION AND PROFESSION

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Come, Thou Fount

Robert Robinson, 1758

NETTLETON
87 87 DJ. Wyeth's
Repository of Sacred Music, Part II, 1813

1. Come, Thou Fount of eve-ry bless-ing; tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
2. Here I raise mine Eb - e - ne - zer: hith - er by Thy help I'm come,
3. Oh to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con - strained to be!

streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing, call for songs of loud - est praise.
and I hope by Thy good pleas - ure safe - ly to ar - rive at home.
Let Thy good - ness, like a fet - ter, bind my wan - d'ring heart to Thee;

Teach me some me - lo - dious son - net, sung by flam - ing tongues a - bove;
Je - sus sought me when a stran - ger wan - d'ring from the fold of God.
prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;

praise the mount! I'm fixed up - on it, mount of Thy re - deem - ing love.
He, to res - cue me from dan - ger, in - ter - posed His pre - cious blood.
here's my heart, O take and seal it; seal it for Thy courts a - bove!

For some, the themes for worship might sound familiar. They come from the well known hymn "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing."

Public domain.

Words: Robert Robinson (1758), alt. Martin Madan (1760) Tune: NETTLETON (8.7.8.7 D)

First Communion in Lent

Here at Zion, we welcome all to receive the gift of Holy Communion, and we are so blessed to invite children to share in this gift.

To support children and families, we are offering first communion instruction during the season of Lent. We will celebrate first communion on Maundy Thursday, March 28, at 6:00 p.m.

We will plan to meet together for two sessions, where students will learn about the history and meaning behind the sacrament, explore the idea of sacrament as mystery, and hear the promise and invitation of the sacrament "for you." If you or your child are interested in receiving first communion instruction and celebrating first communion, please contact Pastor Veronica at pastorveronica@zionloveland.com.

We will schedule the sessions according to your availability!

Music Ministry

Noelle Bauman-Stucky

The choir community is wealthy in friendships.

It may be no surprise that I find making music with friends to be one of the most amazing feelings in the world! I grew up singing in choirs, performing with arts organizations, suffering in marching band, and now living my life while making music with so many people. It is a wonder I have any friends who are not in music (they do exist). Naturally, I spot friendships blossoming in musical communities all of the time. A beautiful part of this is that people are modeling what it means to be a good friend and others notice.

Though the children's choir is small, I see models of friendship every time we get together. It is amazing to see young people show so much care for others. This is a great foundation for a long-lasting and meaningful friendship.

Our Zion Chancel Choir includes members who have spent decades not only singing with friends and loved ones, but also worshipping, celebrating, debating, and even grieving with one another. We will never hear about all of the beautiful moments friends in the choir have shared, but such are those special moments that quietly stay in our minds and warm our hearts. A few choir members have shared moments with me through email and conversation. Following are summaries of some of them.

Receiving a clear answer on how long someone has been involved with the Zion Chancel Choir can sometimes be a difficult task. This is not the case for Don Fenske who has spent fifty-two years singing in the Zion Chancel Choir. Through this time, Don has adjusted to the communication styles of many directors without even using an email address. Many times we would not know

exactly how Don received communication about changes or cancellations, but I have a hunch there were some friends who would and perhaps even still call Don on the phone to relay messages.

Many people have hit major milestones while being choir members. Ruth Sprain has expressed how the tradition of singing "Happy Birthday" to choir members is very special to her. She adds that it "brings a special closeness to the group." It is wonderful to share in these moments and see those birthday smiles widen. I can recall times when milestone birthdays and anniversaries were celebrated by even larger gatherings, but the choir finds a way to make even the smallest gestures feel monumental.

It is disorienting to think how much change can happen in the span of 30 years. Many choir members have moved through multiple stages of life and witnessed others navigate those too. Diane Farnham remembers a time when instead of having a rehearsal, the choir planned a baby shower for her. To this day she regards this as a memorable act of friendship.

Like cheese, wine, or a good scotch, some friendships mature with age and turn out to be something completely unexpected. There are also friendships that immediately pair well and enhance both peoples lives. It seems Marsha Scheese is never shy about sharing her appreciation of someone with a huge smile. Since joining the choir she has made great friendships, and she values all of them. One that has made a large impact on her life is with Carol Ward who first brought Marsha to the choir. Marsha shares, "The incredible thing about my friendship with Carol Ward is that relatively speaking it has been for a short period of time but the bond we have

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Invitation to Care Ministries

Intern Pastor Katie Elkin

On Sunday, January 14, we had the joy of recognizing and blessing those who are involved in our care ministries here at Zion. These ministries include:

- Home communion ministers—bringing the gifts of bread and wine to our members who cannot be physically present in worship
- Healing prayers—interceding on behalf of those in need of healing during worship on the first Sunday of every month
- Stephen Ministry—providing one-on-one care to people experiencing difficult times
- Rides to church—driving individuals to worship (and more!)
- Prayer shawls—knitting/crocheting shawls that serve as a sign of God’s presence for those going through difficult times
- Meals to heal—delivering meals to families and individuals who need support during times of medical recovery or tragedy
- Prayer chain—pausing to pray when receiving prayer request emails
- Parish nurses—offering medical care and advice to community members
- Care callers—calling members of the community on a regular basis to check in and provide support when needed.

Through friendships and mutual relationships this congregation shares God’s abundant love with one another. **If you are interested in getting involved with any of these caring ministries of Zion, please contact one of the pastoral staff.** We will get you any training you might need so that you also feel supported while supporting others!

Music Ministry continued from page 5.

makes it feel as if it has been for a long time. Carol welcomed me to our new community, brought me to this church and this wonderful choir community. She has cooked for me when I had surgery, she has gotten me involved with a wonderful nonprofit, we have laughed together and cried together. Carol is not selfish with her friendship and by sharing it with others she has given me a whole community of friends, and I love her for it.”

Yes, our community is welcoming and wealthy in friendships and connections. Our compassion and care is modeled in our friendships with one another and is spread wider than we know. Thank you all for your friendships.

Seminary Journey Continues

Angie Elder

As many of you know, I began my seminary education in January 2019 at Denver Seminary in Littleton, Colorado, and I have been taking classes for the past five years working toward my Master of Divinity degree with an emphasis in Chaplaincy.

This semester (spring 2024), I will be participating in clinical pastoral education or CPE. This experience brings together theological students and ministry professionals for “on the job” training and personal reflection with peers and supervisors. The CPE experience is an intense time of learning both personally and

As a result of this time commitment, I am stepping away from my position as the Connecting Hearts Coordinator at Zion.

professionally and requires a large time commitment on the job and in the classroom. I will be working with Edward Dennis, a chaplain at Pathways Hospice in Fort Collins January 29-May 10,

2024, and traveling to Denver Seminary every Thursday throughout the semester for class.

As a result of this time commitment, I am stepping away from my position as the Connecting Hearts Coordinator at Zion to focus on this intense learning experience. Upon

completion of my CPE, I have two additional classes and my summative experience to complete before graduation (I can see a light at the end of the tunnel!). My anticipated graduation date is May 2025.

I will continue my candidacy process through the Rocky Mountain Synod of the ELCA and continue to discern my call to Word and Service in the church.

I have received incredible support through words of encouragement and prayer throughout my journey from the Zion

community, and I continue to ask for your prayers as I enter into my CPE experience at Pathways. Please pray for my personal and professional development as well as those I will come alongside as they are experiencing the end of their earthly life.

Thank you for your continued support in my journey of following God’s call and thank you for the ways we will continue to share in ministry together at Zion.

I have received incredible support through words of encouragement and prayer throughout my journey from the Zion community.

Sabbatical Journey in 2024

Pastor Joel Pancoast

On the seventh day of Creation, according to Genesis, God rested (Genesis 2:2-3). Rest is so important, it is not something God did *after* creation, it was embedded as a part of creation. God rests, and so should we (Exodus 20:11). Sabbath is written into the fabric of creation. This is why Christians keep a day of rest and worship in our schedules. When we focus on Sabbath rest, we say “No” to all the things that want us to always be available—work, chores, and earthly responsibilities—and say “Yes” to being available to God. Later, 1-in-7 days of rest becomes 1-in-7 years of release. Every seventh year debts are forgiven (Deuteronomy 15:1-2) to release the poor from economic debts, slaves are freed to release social debts (Deuteronomy 15:12), and even the land is released from ecological “debts” (Exodus 23:10-11). God knows that humanity binds ourselves to work and futility, so God embeds patterns of rest and release into the Word.

This year, the church council has recommended and approved a sabbatical for me. Sabbatical is ordinarily a 3-month time, intended for recharge and renewal, self-directed growth, or to improve professional skills. When I took a sabbatical in 2015, the time was wrapped into a strategic plan so that I could spend time gaining ideas, experiences, and skills for three “dreams” the congregation had discerned about the direction God was taking Zion, while three teams simultaneously worked on action plans for when we returned.

This year, sabbatical will look slightly different. Instead of one 3-month sabbatical, I have chosen to break the sabbatical into two shorter, 6-week time periods. After 16 years of ministry at Zion, which recently included ministry during a pandemic, a pastoral transition, a child going to

college, and an ailing parent, the first part of this sabbatical during early summer will focus on my own rest and renewal in my relationship to God and my family. I will return to ministry for the second half of the summer, and during the fall I will then spend the second part of my sabbatical visiting with churches and leaders to explore ideas that will enhance Zion’s current mission action plan.

The first half of the sabbatical will take place May 25-July 2, with a short return over the weekend of July 26-30. A brief overview of my schedule is as follows.

MAY 25-JUNE 1—Our family will go on a vacation, time for the four of us to rest and play together in The Narrows of Zion National Park.

JUNE 2-JUNE 27—My oldest child Sophia and I will be traveling to Spain to walk 200 miles of the Camino de Santiago. Part of the allure of the Camino is letting each day unfold unplanned, which will be both a challenge and welcome break for me. “Santiago” is James in Spanish, named for one of Jesus’ closest disciples, the brother of John. He is the only disciple whose death is recorded in the Bible for following Jesus (Acts 12:2), but he is not the same disciple credited for writing the letter from James in the New Testament (many believe that was probably Jesus’ brother James). According to legend and apocryphal texts called “The Gospel of the Twelve” and “Breviary of the Apostles,” James spread the Gospel to Spain and was executed after his return to Jerusalem. Then, his followers carried his remains back to Spain to be buried. There is little to support this, but the journey to the burial site has become one of the most popular Christian pilgrimages. For over 1,200

Sabbatical Journey in 2024 continued from page 8.

years, pilgrims have learned to rely on the hospitality of strangers and to be bound both with other pilgrims from around the world and with God.

JUNE 28-JULY 2—I will drive my youngest child Hannah to Valparaiso University in Indiana for Lutheran Summer Music Academy (LSM), a 4-week, faith-based music academy for high school students. I will return to ministry at Zion July 3, but will take another weekend away July 26-30 to attend the festival orchestra concert and worship led by LSM students.

The second half of the sabbatical has not been fully scheduled or planned, but will take place later in the fall. I will focus time to talk with church leaders, and in some cases travel to churches, to explore ideas that will enhance our current mission. I hope to visit a number of “dinner churches” around the country to learn how to keep a sacred feast, engaging in worship and a meal together at the same time. If you participated in the most recent New Year’s Eve or last year’s Christmas Day worship, you have gotten a glimpse of what this might look like. I also hope to explore some ideas for evangelism,

teaching people how to share their faith and their love of church with others who may not have a church home. Finally, I am also looking into beginning a course through MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) called “Leading from an Emerging Future,” designed to gather a community of worldwide and diverse leaders to think creatively and courageously about how to lead into the unknown future.

I am grateful to the council for encouraging this opportunity, for the staff to provide consistent leadership while I am away (especially Pastor Veronica, Lindsey, and Intern Pastor Katie, all of whom will be most affected by my prolonged absence), and for the congregation, who is such a loving and supportive community of people. I hope you will continue to explore and find ways to say “No” to whatever may demand your time that is not life-giving, and say “Yes” to being available to hear God’s Word for you.

“Buen Camino”—Good Journey



Lutheran Summer Music Academy at Valparaiso University

Hannah Pancoast

This summer, I will be attending the Lutheran Summer Music Academy at Valparaiso University in Indiana. This is a month-long, faith-based residential music academy for high schoolers to come together and make music in a supportive and welcoming community. During my time there, I will focus on my harp skills through advanced musical instruction in several formats. In the evening, I will attend musical programming, social events, and Evening Prayer services based in Lutheran traditions. I am excited to have this unique opportunity for growing in my faith and my musical abilities.

It is an honor to follow in the footsteps of other Zion participants, including Joshua Schairer, Madelynn Schwartz, and Chloe Allen.

I will be sharing my musical abilities with the congregation at a special concert; the date and time of that concert are yet to be determined.

Sunday School

Ronda Buck

Hello Fantastic Zion Lutheran Congregation!

Where did the last quarter go?!?!? We certainly seem to have run out of time—even in the elementary Sunday School. December was a super busy month for us as we practiced and practiced for our Christmas program, presented on December 10 at the second service. We had over 20 children and adults help make this fantastic story come to life in our own sanctuary! We had a donkey, a horse, a cat, angels, wise men, shepherds (Our own Pastor Katie made an outstanding shepherd!), a very young Mary and her husband Joseph (Yes, that was Pastor Veronica!), and three of the most adorable sheep you have ever seen! We had guest musicians, a phenomenal narrator, splendid songs, and even participation from a very well rehearsed audience (SNORE, SNORE, YAWN)! Thank you to all the musicians, singers, performers, Sunday School staff, and the parents of our young people for all the preparations and practicing everyone did to bring this heartwarming show to production!

The fun didn't stop with the program however. Parents Day Out followed the late service and 14 children participated in a yummy pizza lunch. That was followed by introductory activities, arts and crafts, cookie baking, and finished off with a touching Christmas cartoon with popcorn and juice snacks! Thank you to our volunteer artist who helped the kiddos make suncatcher pictures and coloring. Thank you also to Intern Pastor Katie for getting elbow deep with our young boys to make

chocolate
krinkle cookies.
And Pastor
Veronica did a
wonderful job
of rolling some
snickerdoodle
dough in
cinnamon with
our older boys
and girls!
Parents were
super excited to



Pastor Veronica and the middle and high schoolers gathered for a breakfast Bible study.

have had a long afternoon to themselves for cleaning basements, Christmas shopping, maybe a nap or two, and just having the chance to take a breath!

After all that activity, we in elementary SS land took a two-week break; (Intern Pastor Katie and Pastor Veronica were tired after all their “playing.”)

But now we have left Time Traveling behind and have become lassoed into the Wild West!!! HOWDY YA'LL!!! Stop by the Sunday School room upstairs in the northwest corner of the building to see where we are corralled in the Bible for this next quarter. So far we have met Abram as we started on our trail through the Old Testament. Who knows where we will end up! So saddle up and come with us as we kick up some dust—GIDDYUP!!!



Sky Ranch Camp Registration

Pastor Veronica Gould

If your child has not gone to Sky Ranch camp before, it is more than worth the drive up the mountains to spend time away in the presence of a caring, Christ-centered community of friends. They will get to experience the great outdoors, the joys and challenges of activities like hiking, camping, and high ropes, and worship designed with them in mind. We pray that your time at camp will be transformative, spirit-renewing, and fun!

This summer, we are inviting Zion youth of all age groups to attend camp at Sky Ranch in the same week. Children completing 3rd grade through 12th grade are invited to go to camp the week of July 28-August 2. Children completing 1st grade through 3rd grade this year can try a two-night introduction to camp (July 28-30). To register for this week of camp, please contact Pastor Veronica at pastorveronica@zionloveland.com. If any youth are unable to attend this week but would like to attend another week, please talk with Pastor Veronica about other opportunities for registration. Scholarships are available to assist youth in going to camp.

If you have any questions or concerns about camp, I'd love to talk with you.

Sky Ranch Lutheran Camp is excited to introduce its new high school program director, Tyler Stewardson

Tyler is from Logan, Utah. He grew up as a Lutheran in Cache Valley and attended Luther Heights Bible Camp each summer up in the Sawtooth Mountains of Idaho. Tyler says, "I owe so much to the ELCA Lutheran Church for guiding me, supporting me, and being a proactive light in my life." During Tyler's college summers, he returned to work at Luther Heights Bible Camp as a counselor, backpacking guide, and assistant program director. In 2019, Tyler graduated from Utah State University in Outdoor Product Design and Development and spent the last few years honing his skills in the outdoor gear world as a product designer, developer, and product line manager. By the end of 2022, Tyler was missing "the joy of outdoor ministry and the camp world." He returned to outdoor ministry as the director of camp operations at Camp Lutherwood Oregon. He knew he had "made the right decision to dive back into the camp world" where he "felt alive again." Tyler has a passion for the outdoors and leading high adventure programming. He loves to share his musical gifts playing guitar, and he enjoys recognizing the strengths of counselors and encouraging them to grow in their skills.



Tyler Stewardson is the new high school program director at Sky Ranch Lutheran Camp.

Philo offers scholarship opportunity

Examples of the scholarships awarded include (but not limited to) training in careers in health, business, paralegal, cosmetology, automotive repair, retail merchandising, childcare professionals, and police/firefighting professions.

We are looking for applicants who:

- Reside in the geographic Thompson R2-J school district
- Have been accepted into an accredited technical, vocational, associate, or certificate program (two years or less) for 2024-2025
- Are strongly motivated to complete their training
- Have demonstrated financial need for a scholarship for tuition.

Applications are due by March 3, 11:59 p.m.

For more information or to apply, visit www.philoloveland.org/scholarships. With any questions, contact Philo at philoloveland.scholarships@gmail.com.

Philo (short for Philomathean Club) is one of the longest-serving organizations in Loveland. This scholarship money is open to all, regardless of gender or age.

Rocky Mountain Synod Border Immersion Trip

Intern Pastor Katie Elkin

Did you know that we have a sister congregation located at the United States/Mexico border?

Iglesia Luterana Cristo Rey is an ELCA church in El Paso, Texas, that hosts border immersion trips for groups from all over the country. Participants gain a deeper understanding of the realities of life on the border by hearing stories, visiting important locations, and worshipping together with Cristo Rey. And the Rocky Mountain Synod is offering a synod-wide immersion experience this spring! The trip will be from April 13-19 and costs \$550 (not including travel to and from El Paso; scholarships available). Registration ends on March 13! If you are interested in this experience or have any more questions, please reach out to Intern Pastor Katie at intern@zionloveland.com. If you are interested, but need help defraying the expense of this experience, let one of the pastoral staff know.

On this trip you'll experience:

- Personal accounts of border life from members of Iglesia Luterana Cristo Rey
- The fence between El Paso and Juárez and discussion with Border Patrol
- Social justice organizations and ministries in El Paso
- Conversation with an immigration lawyer
- Time with youth at Cristo Rey's after-school program
- The colonias of El Paso and, if desired, Juárez, Mexico
- Worship and fellowship with the Cristo Rey congregation.

Introducing Zion's new members

Forming new friendships

CLINT BLACK

Clint joined Zion after visiting with Kathy Hume who is a member. He enjoys spending time with his two mini-yorkies, driving his red pickup truck, and playing duplicate bridge. At Zion, Clint is interested to help with SafeLot and other local service outreach opportunities.

CHRISTER AND JANET JANSSEN

Christer and Janet are both retired scientists. They have lived in Loveland for 2 years, moving here to be closer to their grandchildren. Previously they have lived in Sweden, California, and Washington. They like to hike, ski, and read, and Janet enjoys gardening. They appreciate the inspiring sermons and the accepting-of-all atmosphere at Zion.

JOHN AND LILLIAN MONSON

John and Lillian moved to Colorado in November 2022. They have lived in Wisconsin, Washington, New Jersey, Wyoming, and other locations in Colorado. John is a retired chemical engineer; Lillian retired from teaching elementary school. John enjoys researching genealogy and reading, and Lillian enjoys making quilts. They like how Zion has a warm, home-like atmosphere.

BOB AND DARLENE MUNNEKE

Bob and Darlene relocated to Loveland about 10 months ago to be near their daughter, Janine Johnson and her family. Bob is a retired ELCA

pastor, and Darlene retired from teaching elementary school. During their down time, they enjoy being with their friends and family. They appreciate Zion's caring community.

KIP AND KRISTEN OTTESON

Kip and Kristen are both teachers. They enjoy spending time with friends and family and building things. Kip and Kristen have lived in Washington, Alaska, Thailand, and now back to Colorado. They look forward to working with Zion's Local Service Committee and Kristen's singing with the choir.

DICK AND KATE PEDERSON

Dick and Kate are retired and moved to Loveland to be closer to their children and grandchildren. They both enjoy hiking, reading, and spending time with their loved ones. They live in Colorado about 6 months out of the year and the rest of the time is spent traveling and working on their cabin in Wisconsin. They appreciate Zion's welcoming, inclusive environment. They look forward to participating in book groups and the men's group when they are in town.

MARSHA SCHEESE

Marsha has been in Loveland for 4.5 years. She relocated from Missouri to be near her son and daughter-in-law. Marsha is retired from banking, and likes to cook, garden, and read in her free time. She enjoys singing in the choir and feels that Zion has been very warm and welcoming.

Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly—April 25, 2:00 p.m.—April 27, noon
Embassy Suites, Loveland
“Synod—On Our Way, Together”

Assembly attendees will gather in Loveland, Colorado, to elect the next bishop and explore what is next for the Rocky Mountain Synod. Zion's 2024 assembly delegates are Joel and Amy Brauner.

Among Members and Friends

At Rest in Our Father's House

Carol Schultz who died January 22, 2024, and whose funeral will be at Zion February 24, 2024

Janice Arzuolaitis

Carolyn Carlson

Matthew Lucero

Vern Ohlendorf

Betty, mother of Susan Samuels

Carole, aunt of Pastor Veronica

David, brother of Kathy Pancoast

Franklin, father of Don Harris

Lynn, sister of Bill McCann

Richard, grandfather of Jordan Ziehr

Roger, brother-in-law of Jean Vosberg

Sharon, sister of Sandy Bilstad

Tom, father of Deb Steine

Wyatt, friend of the Pancoast family.

Joyous Celebrations of New Birth

Aiden, grandson of Corey and Deb Steine

Rhys (Reese), great-grandson of John and Lillian Monson

Scarlett Kalra, granddaughter of Ron and Sarah Christensen

Amelia Caroline, granddaughter of Jami Juergensen and great-granddaughter of Linda and Dan Juergensen.

Joyous Celebrations of Baptism

Amelia Caroline Norton

Scarlett Kalra.

***In my distress I called upon the LORD;
to my God I cried for help.
From his temple he heard my voice,
and my cry to him reached his ears.***

—PSALM 18:6

We Keep in Prayer

Zion offers up prayers for those in need—for members, for friends, for community, for our country, and for the world.

Proven Power of Prayer

On behalf of the Culler family, thank you for your prayers for Jake who suffered blood clots in his legs. Jake is the 15-year-old grandson of my friend Karen who, knowing I am a Christian, asked me to include Jake on Zion's prayer chain. Since May 2023, Jake has undergone seven surgeries and currently gets injections plus takes pills for blood thinning. Thankfully, he is recovering well; he has returned to school and has been advised to resume running for Mountain View High School where he was a star runner. Returning from one of his surgeries, a reluctant Jake was encouraged by the running team and the coach to participate in a race. He did. He finished last but at the finish line, the whole team was there cheering for him. Grandma Karen commented, "Surely your prayers have helped Jake recover. This has made such an impression; God works in mysterious ways." Definitely this is a proven example of our prayers being heard and answered. Thank you.

Evelyn Haber

Among Members and Friends

Prayer shawls give comfort . . .

across state lines

Thank you for all your prayers and the prayer shawl during my husband's illness even though I don't know many of you across several state lines. It was so kind of my niece to deliver it. The shawl is now on my bedstand and is a great comfort to me especially at night since his death.

Name Anonymous

and at home

I am so grateful that there are angels unawares who help deliver prayer shawls. Carol [Schultz] had a prayer shawl from Zion that she kept with her during her hard and long ordeal. She died wrapped in her prayer shawl. Thanks be to God that Zion's prayers have been with Carol and sent her to her heavenly home in peace and victory.

Our editor seemed to think now is a good time to share my personal prayer shawl. It was made by Hannah and Sonja as a welcome to Colorado. Little did we know that almost 6 years ago this beautiful gift would have so many adventures...joy when I caught my breath at home during quiet times after many celebrations and visits from family and friends, anxious times after hospitals and waiting rooms, and now a time of peaceful waiting for the fullness of God's time for Elliott's journey Home. As I have seen the blessings of these shawls to so many, it is with deep gratitude for me now to be wrapped in prayers of family and friends for God's gracious love and mercy.

Kathy Pancoast

[We are grateful for Kathy who is Zion's own "angel unawares" for her diligent and compassionate outreach on behalf of Zion's prayer shawl ministry.]



Wrapped in her personal prayer shawl, Kathy Pancoast finds comfort.

*Zion,
Thank you so much for the care packages and kind words. My semester is going well. Hope everything at Zion is going smoothly and you are having a good day. Got myself a coffee from your gift card for my first day of classes! Praying for you all!*

*Love,
Zoey ♡*

*Dear Zion Lutheran Church,
We want to extend a huge thank you for your support this year at our Harvest Gala! Thank you for your generous donation and for partnering with us as we continue our work with families in need. We could not do this without you! Thanks again.*

The Safe Families Team

Thank you! Your support is greatly appreciated!

*Thompson School District
McKinney Vento Team*

The Thompson School District's McKinney Vento Homeless Education Program works with homeless families to ensure immediate enrollment of their children in school. The McKinney Vento Homeless Education Liaison helps arrange transportation to and from a child's school of origin, ensures that homeless students receive services comparable to those received by housed peers, and identifies and eliminates barriers to school enrollment and attendance.

<https://www.tsd.org/departments/learning-services/federal-programs/mckinney-vento-homeless-education-act>

LIFT: Ladies in Fellowship Together = Friendships!

While LIFT is an acronym for ladies in fellowship together, it also refers to an opportunity for lifting up one another's spirits—spiritually and otherwise—and for forming new friendships. Each gathering focuses on a theme and offers devotions, entertainment, nourishment—again spiritually and otherwise—and recognizing birthdays of that month. Examples of the entertainment include playing bingo, a Halloween costume competition, unbelievable magic tricks performed by Phyllis Zimmerman's son Doug, and a special Christmas celebration of Jesus' birth. The January 2024 theme was "aprons" whereby the group heard apron history and poetry plus shared their personal aprons and nostalgic apron stories.

To validate the emphasis on LIFT friendships, the lyrics to their theme song include:

*For your friends are my friends, and my friends
are your friends; the more we get together the
happier we'll be.*

With the exception of November, this group meets the fourth Tuesday of each month at 11:00 a.m. usually at Zion or the Golden Corral restaurant with other locations for special events such as a summer picnic at a community park. The next LIFT gathering will be February 27 at Zion. Mark your calendars, ladies, and plan to be there for an uplifting time of faithful fellowship among this friendly bunch. And, bring a friend.

LIFT coordinators are Gwen Boswell, Eileen Huddle, Elaine Nichols, and Carol Ward.

Continued on page 17.

Thank You Letters to Zion

- December 5, 2023—From KidsPak for a donation of \$231.16.
- December 14, 2023—From Loveland Habitat for Humanity for a donation of \$25.00.
- December 22, 2023—From the Rocky Mountain Synod ELCA for congregational mission support for 2023 of \$55,831.71.
- From Lutheran Episcopal Campus Ministry for a gift of \$350.00.
- January 2, 2024—From The Matthews House for a gift of \$690.55.
- January 24, 2024—From the Food Bank for Larimer County for a gift of \$100.00.

Zion reaches out to community in numerous ways.



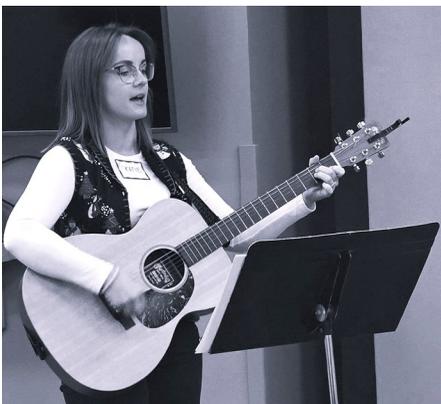
Zion delivered a car full of 28 bags of Thanksgiving dinner makings to its neighbors in need.

LIFT: Ladies in Fellowship Together = Friendships! continued from page 16.



The December LIFT gathering is always special and well attended, and this year was extra special for the devotion presented by Angie Elder and the singing accompanied by Intern Pastor Katie playing her guitar.

LIFT gathered in December at Zion to celebrate Jesus' birth and enjoyed a catered lunch. Angie Elder presented the devotion, "Unwrapping the Names of Jesus" adapted from the book by Asheritah Ciuciu. By focusing on the person and character of Jesus through his different names, the ladies unwrapped different names of Jesus on Christmas ornaments with which they decorated the Christmas tree. This allowed participants to prepare their hearts for the birth of the Savior and



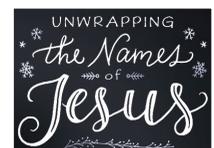
Intern Pastor Katie played the guitar to accompany the singing of many familiar Christmas carols.

join with all the faithful singing from our hearts, "O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!" Intern Pastor Katie played the guitar to accompany the singing of many familiar Christmas carols.

**The gathering was joyous,
and
the fellowship was sweet!**



Angie Elder presented the devotion, "Unwrapping the Names of Jesus."



Loveland SafeLot Community Update at Zion

Anita Turner-Steele

SafeLot is a community initiative that Zion is proud to be part of. January was the third month of the program and the second month that Zion hosted guests. (Guests move back and forth, monthly, between the two hosts sites: Zion and King of Glory.)

Currently, four cars are registered with the program, with room for five. Guests park at the lot overnight (6:00 p.m. until 8:00 a.m., at the latest). The host site provides electrical hookup and extension cords, and each guest has an electric blanket. When the temperature drops below criteria set by the Loveland SafeLot Parking Steering Committee, guests sleep overnight inside the host site building with a volunteer host. (Hosts are allowed to sleep too!) In January, we had nine nights that met inside criteria.

In November, Zion fed one meal per week to our guests, and we had so many volunteers offer to make meals that it was suggested that we consider offering two per week in January. In January, we did feed two meals per week to our guests. They are also given at least two shower opportunities per week.

Volunteers from Zion, St. Spyridon, and King of Glory are all currently working on this community effort, and other community volunteers are welcome! How can you help? We always welcome people to make meals and eat with the guests, pick up laundry after an overnight or shower and bring it back the next day, check the lot in the morning (instructions provided!) five mornings a week, check on the lot in the evenings (instructions provided!), clean up the showers (instructions provided!), or be on call in case an overnight host is needed (instructions provided!). [Are you sensing a theme here?] And, I am always available to any volunteers for questions, concerns, or to help in any way.

Most importantly, if you have helped our guests in any way in the past 3 months, I'd like to thank you, from the bottom of my heart. They are so grateful for every meal, every warm greeting, every clean towel, every clean sheet, every warm room, the clean port-a-potty—every kind thing each of you has done for them. You may think, "It's no big deal," but, to them, little things mean so very, very much.

Hassib's status

Will Reents, Refugee Sponsorship Committee

We are pleased to tell you, in case you didn't know already, that Hassib has been granted asylum status and he has been told he is being processed for a green card or permanent residence. It may take 6 or more months, but at least his application is being processed. He is most interested in getting his family here but hasn't heard of much headway in that regard. Senator Bennett wrote that he would like to meet with Hassib. A nationwide effort is underway to get the Afghan Adjustment Act (AAA) passed and many letters have been sent, including many from our three ELCA Loveland churches; however, no significant progress has been made at this time. Hassib continues to be employed by his original employer and amazes us with his positive attitude and resilience.

Greetings from Madagascar

Pastor Doug Cox

Greetings from Madagascar, where I want to share an update on the impact your partnership on building a well in southern Madagascar continues to make.

Perhaps the most unexpected is about bananas! Global Health Ministries (GHM) consultant Dr. Andry Ranaisonson shed happy tears as he shared the news that the project has brought enough water in the desert to make growing banana trees possible in 2023! "Seeing banana trees in this region of the country is exceptional ". . . I was born in the south and have never seen bananas grown there my whole life!"

Water is scarce in this region and malnutrition is the norm for over a million people impacted by the persistent drought that has plagued this region. Using geological techniques associated with finding oil, GHM is partnering with SALFA (the Malagasy Lutheran Health Department) to locate water deep beneath the surface. This "deep-seated water" is clean, abundant all year round, and doesn't depend on rainfall.



Happiness for this lad is a glass of clean drinking water!

Local residents serve as a trusted water team to maintain and protect the water. Drip irrigation and well researched seed selection have brought two crops already this year to the village of Angodobo, one of the water project sites. These were the first dependable crops Angodobo has had in five years. Dependable water is making sustainable nutrition and income generation possible.

Meanwhile, with information and encouragement from community health workers, the community is beginning to adopt wider toilet usage, handwashing, good nutrition, prenatal care, and much more. In 2023, three pilot sites including Angodobo have proven the concept, and we anticipate reaching 15 more sites in 2024. The combination of water, agriculture, and CHN's mobilizing volunteers to bring healthier habits to thousands of the world's most vulnerable people is bringing abundant joy!

Thank you for your partnership!



An unexpected impact of the new well is the ability to grow bananas in the desert!



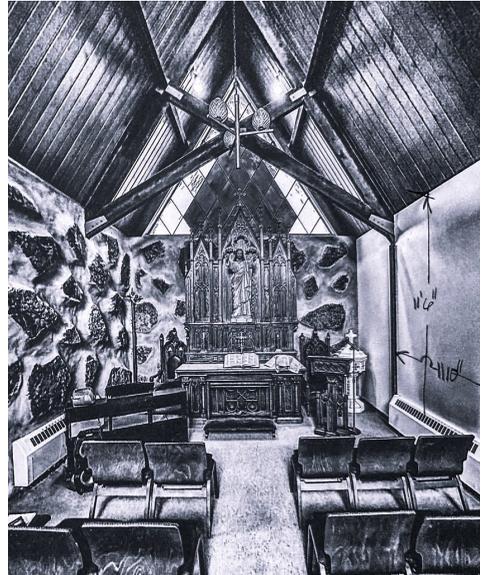
Due to drip irrigation and researched seed selection, Angodobo has the first dependable crops in five years!

Together in Faith and Service

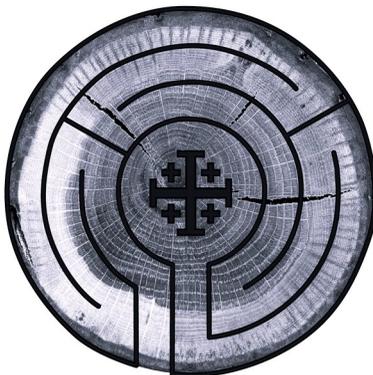
Chapel Renovation

Zion is blessed with a small chapel located just behind the sanctuary, to the west. Though many may not even be aware of its presence in the Zion building, the chapel is a perfect place for small services and devotional times, small groups and prayer meetings. As you enter the chapel, you are greeted by the altar from the original church building, still located at 6th and Adams downtown, and a statue of Jesus with outstretched arms of blessing. Though it has still been used occasionally, it is one of the few spaces in the building that has not been remodeled in many decades.

After Ginger Klein's death in December 2022, a few of her close friends wanted to honor her by creating a space in the church for quiet meditation and prayer. Prayer was essential to Ginger's life and to her friendships. After considering several locations around the building, it was decided that the chapel already provides that space. However, work was needed to update it into a more warm, accommodating space for prayer, including removing a small stairwell into the sanctuary that took away needed floor space and functionality.



Upon completion of the remodel, Zion's chapel will provide the perfect place for quiet meditation and soulful prayer.



New flooring will include a prayer labyrinth, featuring the image of a tree stump to complement the forest wall mural and the moss rock wall.

The remodel will introduce new flooring, including a prayer labyrinth for people to walk as a prayer exercise. There will also be a comfortable space in the back of the chapel for individuals or small prayer groups, along with different resources and music for prayer and meditation. Of course, the tradition of friends who came before us and Jesus who guides us will still be the focus at the front of the chapel. All of this will be tied together with a wall mural, colors, and more that will make you feel as if you are in a peaceful forest setting. We look forward to using the space more regularly for prayer soon as we live into another part of our mission to share God's abundance and to open our ears, minds, and hearts to the world through prayer. The remodeling work has just begun. Stop by sometime to see the progress!

Thanks to the team working hard on this project: Angie Elder, Rob Huffsmith, Jacob Kuhs, Jessica Kuhns, Kathy Loken, and Carolyn Smela.

Advent / Christmas / New Year's Eve Reflections

Intern Pastor Katie Elkin

Advent, Christmas, and New Year's Eve was a full time here at Zion! Our "Out of Time" worship theme offered ample time (pun intended) to reflect on God's work in our lifetimes and outside of our understandings of time. We experienced a 6-week Advent, including a modified Advent wreath, a giant clock in the sanctuary that changed every week, and a delightful, spiral-y Advent family devotional. The children and youth of Zion worked hard to prepare their Christmas program, which featured beautiful music, hysterical jokes, and some Oscar-level acting! Thank you, children, youth, and leaders!! I am grateful to have experienced this Advent season in a congregation that is so open to trying new things in worship and experiencing God in timeless ways together.



Making Advent calendars was one activity offered at the family-focused Advent festival.

Christmas Eve was on a Sunday last year, so in addition to our two Sunday morning worships, we had three Christmas Eve worships at 4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m., and 10:30 p.m.! I heard someone joke that we could get "BINGO" by going to all five; can any of you claim a Zion Christmas Eve BINGO?



The children and youth of Zion worked hard to prepare their Christmas program.

The morning of the 24th, we were blessed by the musical gifts of many in our congregation, as we journeyed through the story of faith, using lessons and carols. Thank you to everyone who contributed their singing voices, reading voices, and instruments (especially our collaborative pianist, Ryan Marvel) to make this worship special!

Continued on page 22.

Advent / Christmas / New Year's Eve Reflections continued from page 21.

The 4:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service featured an interactive message by a disgruntled shepherd (Joel Brauner) who interrupted Pastor Veronica's sermon to try and find a very important person. The important person didn't end up being a king, an oil baron, or even a dad (all played by Christ West). The important person was the newborn Jesus Christ! A big "thanks" to all who put in their time (and acting skills) to make this service a wonderful experience for Zion's children and families of all ages!



A disgruntled shepherd, in search of a very important person, interrupted Pastor Veronica's sermon



Not even a king was the important person being sought this night.

The 6:00 p.m. service was our more "traditional" service where Pastor Veronica actually got to finish her sermon, and we were led in music by the Zion Chancel Choir and Bell Choir. Noelle and Neil rocked their first Christmas Eve in their new musical roles at Zion, and Thomas led the bells with gusto!



Zion's full day of Christmas worship concluded with a candle-lit service. O Holy Night!

We finished our full day of worship with a contemplative, candle-lit worship at 10:30 p.m.

Continued on page 23.

Advent / Christmas / New Year's Eve Reflections continued from page 22.

The Debbie Boose Memorial Fund made it possible for Joshua Schairer to gather a quartet to lead our beautiful eventide experience. This service was especially meaningful to me, as we got to sing new lyrics to the tune “Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah” that were inspired by our extended Advent season and written by one of Zion’s own members! We are truly blessed with abundant gifts of art, music, leadership, and friendship here at Zion.

If those various Christmas worships didn’t quite scratch your worship itch, you might have come back to Zion on the morning of the 31st for New Year’s Eve brunch church! Brunch church (or really any meal-time church) is an intimate way to worship around the table with one another. Holy Eucharist can take on a new meaning when you pass the bread to your friend sitting next to you, just as Jesus did on the night in which he was betrayed. Holy Scripture can breathe new life into the room as God’s Word bubbles up from conversations over cinnamon rolls and orange juice. While it may have been unfamiliar to begin with confession and forgiveness, receive communion, load up our plates with delicious brunch, and then sit back down for the rest of worship, I heard many stories of deeper connection with new and old friends through our brunch church worship experience. And, I need to give a HUGE shout-out to Rich Marquardt, Stig Oresjo, and Pam Stevens for adapting the Zoom stream and sound setup to our new location and worship style! Thank you, technology people!!

Through this season, I have been amazed at this congregation’s creativity and imagination regarding the ways we can worship God. May our creative God continue to guide our worship and our lives, revealing the incarnate Christ to us in every time and place.



A quartet provided special music that enhanced the eventide worship experience.



The New Year's Eve brunch church offered worship enhanced by connection with new and old friends seated around tables in the fellowship hall.

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**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

Issue 1/24

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YouTube: Zion Lutheran Church Loveland

Join Us in Worship

8:15 a.m. Traditional Worship
In Person or Zoom

10:45 a.m. Contemporary Worship
In Person or Zoom

Our Mission:

Together we share God's
abundance to transform lives
through the love of Jesus.

Our Vision:

Living in God's boundless
love, in Christ we envision a
future where church and
community are one.

**Celebrate Your Faith—
Renew Your Spirit—
Love One Another**

Important Dates Related to Newsletter Content (Read the Articles for Details)

| | |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| February 14 | Ash Wednesday—6:00 p.m. Worship |
| February 24 | Carol Schultz Funeral |
| February 27 | LIFT |
| March 3 | Deadline to apply for Philo Scholarship |
| March 13 | Deadline to register for Border Immersion Trip |
| March 20 | Holy Week Mini-Musical |
| March 24 | Palm Sunday |
| March 28 | Maundy Thursday, First Communion—6:00 p.m. Worship |
| March 29 | Good Friday—6:00 p.m. Worship |
| March 31 | Easter Sunday |
| April 13-19 | Border Immersion Trip |
| April 25-27 | Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly |
