



Eye on Zion

A Quarterly Newsletter for the People of Zion Lutheran Church

February-March-April
2025

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The Good Life

Pastor Joel Pancoast

What do you think about when you hear “the good life?” Most people associate the good life with social status, wealth, or even fame. I have seen posters or memes that picture the good life as a large house with beautiful cars, or a lifestyle of relaxing on a beach. But Jesus gives us a completely different picture of the good life. The Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew 5-7, is where we most fully hear about Jesus’ thoughts on the good life. It is probably Jesus’ most well-known words and one of history’s most famous speeches ever. People are familiar with many of the words, even if they don’t know where they’re from. For example:

- You are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14).
- If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also (5:39).
- Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you (5:44).
- Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name (6:9).

- Do not judge, so that you may not be judged (7:1).
- Do to others as you would have them do to you (7:12).

The list of familiar Jesus quotes goes on and on! Emphasizing humility, forgiveness, and generous care for our neighbors, Jesus encourages people to choose God’s way of love, which will eventually renew all of creation. He calls this restored world God’s Kingdom, which is a realm in which heaven and earth are inseparably combined, a place where life flourishes that’s free from injustice, suffering, and death. This is what Jesus calls the good life!

Jesus’ good life sounds impossible for us in this life, if not challenging what we think we know of as the good life. Most of the ideas in the Sermon on the Mount sound like nonsense and weakness in our modern world, where success usually means strength and power more than vulnerability and love. In fact, recent history has proven just

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how radical Jesus' words are, when just in the last few years pastors around the country have been either fired or criticized so heavily that they resigned, just for preaching the Sermon on the Mount. They were challenged for being "too political" or "too weak" against what we think threatens society, or the very faith that they invite. Even here at Zion, about five years ago one of our pastors was criticized for preaching against the ideals of our country. When asked what was said that was anti-patriotic, the words repeated back to us were word for word quotes from the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-11)! Jesus' words and teachings about the good life are challenging, to say the least.

Probably one of the most radical things about the Sermon on the Mount is that Jesus did not share these teachings only as something we have to look forward to in some far-off future after we die. He actually expects us to be able to live this good life now! And as much as they may threaten our lifestyle and identity, things we hold onto so dearly, Jesus promises that they will lead to the good life as God intends for us.

The good life is difficult to reach. In fact, it is one of those things that the harder we try on our own, the further we may move from God's purpose, because in fact we are not meant to do it on our own.

The good life is not an achievement at all, but it is a way of following and trusting Jesus.

Jesus' good life cannot be separated from our great need for Jesus, and one of the clearest ways Jesus shows himself to us is in the gathered community of faith, and in the poor and suffering of the world.

Wednesdays in Lent—Schedule

During the season of Lent, we invite you into exploring the good life with others in community. Lent is one of my favorite times of the year, because it is a time for us to commit to practicing our faith together. At Zion, that happens around the table as we eat together, then with conversations around faith and life, and finally closing the evening with Holden Evening Prayer, a brief but beautiful sung worship. I hope you will join us as we explore the good life together and encourage each other to live into it as we follow Jesus.

- 5:00 - 5:45 p.m.—Soup Supper

You do not have to arrive at 5:00 p.m. Join us any time during mealtime for amazing soup and fellowship! Also, help by providing a soup to share one or two weeks.

- 5:45 - 6:45 p.m.—Caring Conversations

We will have conversations around the Sermon on the Mount, our struggles, and how Jesus invites us to follow him to live the good life.

- 6:45 - 7:15 p.m.—Holden Evening Prayer

If you are interested in sharing a story, contact one of the pastors. If you want to help lead Holden Evening Prayer, contact Noelle.

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Wednesdays in Lent—Themes

March 5—Ash Wednesday—Blessed Are You—Matthew 5:1-11

We who are poor in spirit, who mourn, and who hunger and thirst for righteousness are called blessed by our Savior in his Sermon on the Mount. Ash Wednesday reminds us that though we have been brought low by sin, our Lord will bless us with new life in him, so we will hear the opening descriptions of the good life preached in the Sermon on the Mount.

March 12—Salt and Light—Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus calls us to be salt and light in this world of sin. We who have tasted and seen his great love for us on the cross can add flavor to the world by shining the light of Christ for all to see in the places where God has put us.

March 19—Prayer and Fasting—Matthew 6:5-18

The good life is known when we have two-way communication with God, and when we are free from distractions to Jesus' good life. Jesus invites us into prayer as a way of communicating with God, and fasting as a way of giving up distractions to learn more about God and ourselves.

March 26—Do Not Worry—Matthew 6:25-34

So much of our lives is spent worrying about what might happen or what has happened, but most of what we worry about we have very little control over. Jesus teaches us to stop worrying about the things we cannot control, and instead trust that he knows what is best and will take care of us. When we trust Jesus and focus on what God values, we become more free and content with life.

April 2—Judge Not—Matthew 7:1-5

This command is often misinterpreted as a prohibition against all judgment, but judgment can actually help us determine the "right thing" for following Jesus. When Jesus says, "Judge not," he is specifically urging us to avoid condemning others and instead to practice self-reflection and humility. By teaching that we'll be judged by the same standard we use to judge others, he encourages compassion over condemnation. When we leave all judgment to God, we free ourselves to look at one another through fresh and forgiving eyes.

April 9—Build on a Rock—Matthew 7:24-27

We often build our lives on very shaky foundations and are surprised when things start to fall apart. Jesus reminds us in his teachings that he is the only solid foundation and invites us to build our lives on him alone.

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Care to Share?

Occasionally, we have people share their stories in worship during Lent. If you came to Lenten Midweek service or tuned in by Zoom, you may have heard Amy Brauner, Beilynn Geiss, Kevin Patrick, Bill Kurtz, or Janice Ehlers share stories about how God has been present in their lives through friendships that helped them grow in faith. If you have a story to share that reflects on any of the following weekly themes for midweek Lent, please let one of the pastoral staff know. It's easier than you may think, because (1) it's your story, (2) we don't expect you to share for more than a few minutes, and (3) we will help you figure out how to tell it if you want. Also, if you're interested but you're not sure if you can be there to share in front of others, we can record a video and share it that way. Below are some question prompts to get you thinking about sharing your story.

Week 1—Salt and Light

Salt is a seasoning. Do you have an example when Jesus has made your life “spicy,” or your faith has added spice to someone else’s life?

Salt is a preservative. Have you ever experienced a way that Jesus has preserved your world?

Or, have you experienced how the light of Christ has “enlightened” you, or “shed some light” on a situation in your life so you could experience Jesus’ good life?

Week 2—Prayer and Fasting

Do you have an experience with prayer that you want to share? Or something that has been a distraction to your relationship with God, that when you got it out of the way, you experienced Jesus’ good life?

Week 3—Do Not Worry

Have you had a debilitating worry about something and learned to trust God? Have you experienced worrying about something you had no control over, and seen how God brought you through it to experience Jesus’ good life?

Week 4—Judge Not

Have you ever experienced a movement from condemning others to practicing self-reflection and humility? Have you ever felt your heart soften toward someone you didn’t like or understand?

Week 5—Build on a Rock

Have you ever focused your life on the wrong things in life and had everything come tumbling down? What does it mean for you to build your life on the solid foundation of Jesus?

Sundays in Lent: everything [in] between

Pastor Joel Pancoast

Lent is a 40-day season that leads up to Easter, meant to prepare Christians for the celebration of resurrection on Easter Sunday. In the early church, Lent was a time for baptismal candidates to prepare for their welcome into the Christian church through intense instruction in the Scriptures, and by turning away from their old lives toward a life in the way of Jesus. Over time, this opportunity for instruction and intentionality has expanded beyond baptismal candidates to include all Christians. For some, that instruction and intentionality continues by engaging in traditional faith practices of prayer, fasting, almsgiving (giving to those in need), and penance (confession and forgiveness). For others, that may happen in other ways that create a more intentional way of living and following Jesus, like more regular worship, study, invitation, encouraging, or serving. However you choose, I encourage you to find something intentional to ground you more fully in the Scriptures and in Jesus' invitation to the good life.



**everything [in] between:
Meeting God IN the Midst of Extremes**

Sunday worship during Lent will help us learn to navigate the polarities in our lives with more faith, intention, and openness to be transformed. The theme for the season, “everything [in] between,” invites us to hear stories from Luke’s gospel that have captured both sacred and secular imagination, carrying cultural relevance and lore. For example,

have you ever identified as either a “Mary” or a “Martha” type of person? The “Good Samaritan” title alone reaches beyond the story from Scripture to refer to a hospital, charitable organization, a type of law, or a good deed. Many of the Scriptures for Sunday worship in this season hold significance in pop culture, church history, politics, and everything in between.

Each Sunday in Lent we will explore two supposed binaries, like “faith & works,” or “rest & growth,” or “grief & hope.” We often consider these ideas to be opposing, but as we explore these ideas in the Scriptures, we find nuance and complexity. We find that these contradictions are false. We might begin to see a full spectrum of “everything in between” instead of simple black and white options. And, hopefully, we will experience God present in that in between.

So during this Lenten season, we invite you to look between the many false binaries in life and the easy answers, to imagine where God might be meeting us beyond the categories we create or others create. This theme speaks to people who feel as if they are living in a divided world. It is an invitation to seek a spiritual life of following Jesus into the complexity instead of avoiding it. This Lent, we’re entrusting that God shows up in the shades of gray, rainbow hues, and everywhere in between.

March 9—stranger & neighbor
Luke 10:25-37 (Parable of the Good Samaritan)

March 16—faith & works
Luke 10:38-42 (Mary and Martha Host Jesus)

March 23—rest & growth
Luke 13:6-9,31-35 (Parable of the Fig Tree)

Sundays in Lent: everything [in] between continued from page 5.

March 30—lost & found
Luke 15:1-32 (Parables of the Lost)

April 6—righteousness & mercy
Luke 19:1-10 (Zacchaeus Greets Jesus)

April 13—Palm Sunday—shouting & silence
Luke 19:29-42 (Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem)

April 17—Maundy Thursday—power & humility
Luke 22:1-27 (Jesus' Last Supper)

April 18—Good Friday—acceptance & resistance
Luke 23: 32-49 (Jesus Dies Alongside a Penitent Thief)

April 20—Easter Sunday—grief & hope
Luke 24:1-12 (The Women Grieve and Peter Runs to the Tomb)

Holy Week Services

Ash Wednesday—March 5

12:00 p.m. at Trinity Lutheran Church
6:00 p.m. at Zion

Palm Sunday—April 13

8:15 a.m. Traditional Worship
9:30 - 10:30 a.m. Breakfast
10:45 a.m. Contemporary Worship

Maundy Thursday—April 17

12:00 p.m. at King of Glory Lutheran Church
6:00 p.m. at Zion

Good Friday—April 18

12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. at Zion

Easter Vigil—April 19

6:30 p.m. at Trinity Lutheran Church

Easter Sunday—April 20

6:30 a.m. Sunrise in the Memorial Garden
8:15 a.m. Traditional Worship
10:45 a.m. Contemporary Worship

Held Together in Christ

Pastor Joel Pancoast

Held Together in Christ is a Sunday morning faith formation opportunity held every third Sunday of each month, in which we try to live into Zion's vision.

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

- We are rooted in the gospel, grounded in the love of Christ and open to the Spirit's leading.
- Our community is transformed through relationships.
- God's gift of creation is cared for and protected.
- All are embraced and celebrated in their differences.
- The gifts God has given each of us are identified, appreciated, and shared.
- Through Christ, the complicated, difficult, and sometimes messy nature of gathering people of different perspectives and backgrounds is recognized and welcomed.
- Everyone's needs are met because God's abundance has been shared.

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We are currently working through a guide called “One Anothering: Choosing Each Other in a Politically Divided World.” In January, we tested the guide with the first session, “From Polarized Politics to Kingdom Politics,” and it was well received, so we will continue to work through the guide together. The term



“one another” comes from the Greek word *allelon*, which appears 100 times in the New Testament. These verses, such as Jesus’ command in John 13: “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another,” guide us in building relationships marked by Christ’s love.

Our deep hope is that by practicing “one anothering,” we will be empowered to embody Christlike qualities in our everyday interactions. Each session concludes with practical steps to apply what we learn and discuss, encouraging us to live out faith in real-world conversations.

Held Together in Christ meets in the fellowship hall each third Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

- February 16—From Scarcity to Abundance
- March 16—From Contempt to Love
- April 27 (moved to fourth Sunday because of Easter Sunday)—From Cocooning and Combat to Covenantal Communication

We know the journey won’t be perfect, but by rooting ourselves in Christ, we can confidently face political differences, trusting that even our imperfect efforts will point others toward the Kingdom of God.

We hope you can join us!

Campus Ministry Update

Zion is so blessed to have not one but two campus ministries right here in the Northern Colorado region that we relate to—LuMin at Colorado State University (CSU) in Fort Collins and LECM at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) in Greeley.

Recently, we provided students with care packages, and in the past, we have partnered with campus ministries for service projects and retreats.

We are looking forward to receiving the Word from a student preacher on Sunday, February 9, for Campus Ministry Sunday. Seb, a first-year student with LECM, will be preaching on Luke 5:1-11, Jesus’ calling of the disciples.

Campus ministry is a vital space for discipleship in our church. We are grateful for the relationships we have been able to build.

If you would like to support campus ministry, both LuMin and LECM have a weekly dinner, and they are always looking for volunteers who love to cook for students. You are invited to stay and share in dinner as you get to know students and worship together as well.

Pastor Veronica has been serving on the LECM Board for about a year, and one of the great joys of connecting with this community has been learning from the students’ curiosity and desire to grow in faith.

In this season, both LuMin and LECM are planning for a pastoral transition. As they enter into the call process, we are praying for their discernment and God’s guidance, so that they could continue to carry out the mission to which God has called them. Your prayers and support are very much appreciated during this time!

Music Ministry

Noelle Bauman-Stucky

Greetings and Blessings to all,

As I write, our winter months have been mild. However, our systems crave the hibernation that comes with the dark, and also the new beginnings when plants and plans begin to emerge in the spring. I look forward to worshiping with you all through this time as our thoughts incubate, and we sit with one another and the powerful words in the music traditionally used at this time. Following is some information about what is coming up.

Chancel Choir

Our Chancel Choir is excited to embark on a collaboration with Namaqua Universal Unitarian Church singing “The Ground” by Ola Gjelo. As some of you may know, Ryan Marvel, our collaborative pianist, is the music director at Namaqua. We are thrilled to share in worship with our community at Namamqua on April 27 and at Zion on May 4. It is incredible that we are surrounded by welcoming people who share in a desire to bless others with music.



Zion's Chancel Choir

Lenten Season

Even after months of singing Holden Evening Prayer through the 2020 Lenten season and onward for a few months, I still get chills of excitement hearing it again. Now I know what many of you Lutherans have been experiencing

for decades! We will be using Holden Evening Prayer in our Lenten midweek services. If you desire to help lead one of the services, please reach out.

Last year we started a small group for children during our midweek gatherings. We plan to continue this as an option for our youth and children. We know some families enjoy spending the evening together for dinner and small groups, and some families may need a space for their young ones. We are offering a space for children to do some hands-on crafts, engage in meaningful conversation, and learn a little more about the music and history of Holden Evening Prayer. Children and youth are welcome to jump in on any Wednesday.

The next few months will require the Music Ministry schedule to shift slightly. Please see the changes below. Praise Band will continue with regular rehearsals every other Thursday night at 6:00 p.m. If you are interested in being part of any of these groups, please reach out to me or Neil Forsythe, or any member of the groups. We welcome singers and instrumentalists of many levels.

Bell Choir rehearsals
Wednesdays, 5:00-5:45 p.m.

Chancel Choir rehearsals
Wednesdays, 7:15-8:00 p.m.

Health and Wellness Community Orchestra

In January, I started rehearsals with the Health and Wellness Community Orchestra in Fort Collins. I am excited to guide them through a program of music composed by female

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composers. In honor of Women’s History Month, I have planned three works by female composers spanning the classical era to the twenty-first century. We will perform Marianna Martines’ *Sinfonia in C Major*, Joan Tower’s *Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman, No. 6*, and Amy Beach’s *Symphony in E Minor* (the “Gaelic”). Performance information follows. I will hang a few posters as time nears,

Sunday, March 9, 2025, 4:00 p.m.

Griffin Concert Hall

University Center for the Arts

1400 Remington Street, Fort Collins

Welcome to Catacombs

Sarah Gall

In Pastor Veronica’s words, Catacombs is a time for us to come together, worshiping individually, in a collective setting. With the music of Cageless Birds having a profound impact on my life, it is too great not to share and is how Zion Catacombs was born. Letting the music speak for itself, here are the lyrics to a beautiful reminder to hold onto throughout the year.

Comfort and Joy

Cageless Birds, Molly Skaggs

*Winter’s calling, nowhere to hide
Branches barren all in the light
Feeling, fragile, words don’t suffice
Longing, waiting, all through the night
He’s knocking on your door
In the quiet love is born
Comfort and joy to the one he came for
Comfort and joy to your heart
Comfort and joy to the one he came for
Comfort and joy to your heart
He’s knocking on your door
In the quiet, love is born
Catching every tear from your eye*

*Holding your hand, friend by your side
He’s knocking on your door
In your longing, love is born
Comfort and joy to the one he came for
Comfort and joy to your heart
Comfort and joy to the one he came for
Comfort and joy to your heart
Comfort and joy to the one he came for
Comfort and joy to your heart
Comfort and joy to the one he came for
Comfort and joy to your heart
He’s knocking on your door
In your longing, love is born*

During the winter season, *Sing Winter* by Cageless Birds plays in the sanctuary throughout the Catacombs hour. You are invited to worship in any way that feels fitting for you. All are welcome to Catacombs the first Sunday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary.

Faith Formation

Pastor Veronica Gould

Sacramental Living and First Communion Instruction

At Zion, when we celebrate communion every Sunday, we proclaim that God welcomes all to the table. Jesus has called all of his disciples to partake in this heavenly feast for the forgiveness of sins and the building up of the Body of Christ in the church. Holy Communion is a sacrament. In the ELCA, we often speak of sacraments in terms of three elements: the command of Jesus (“Do this in remembrance of me”), the “stuff” we can touch (water, bread, wine), and a promise (forgiveness, new life in Christ). Our participation in the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion encourage us in sacramental living. We are transformed by God’s grace. We become what we eat—the Body of Christ.

It is a special joy and delight when a child expresses interest in receiving this gift. This may happen at any age, but we encourage parents to talk to their children about what it is that we receive in communion. If your child has expressed curiosity about Holy Communion, we would love to have a conversation. We will have an interest meeting on Sunday, March 30, at 9:30 a.m. for children and families, where we will share our church’s teachings on the sacrament, faith, and forgiveness. Following the interest meeting, we will schedule an additional preparatory meeting according to your schedule to assist your child as they prepare to receive their First Communion.

We will celebrate First Communion on Maundy Thursday, April 17, at 6:00 p.m. at Zion for any youth who will be receiving their First Communion. For more information, please contact Pastor Veronica.

VBS Day Camp at Zion this Summer

As we prepare for the upcoming summer, we are looking forward to hosting Vacation Bible School (VBS) Day Camp once again. VBS is a fun week to connect with youth in our church and the wider community, with our partnership with local congregations and our neighbors. There’s something so amazing about gathering together around God’s story with little ones. We get to share the joy and good news of the gospel while playing together, worshipping, and serving our neighbors.

This year, we are partnering again with Sky Ranch staff who will lead us in worship and stations throughout the day. We will also have lots of opportunities for older youth and adults to serve: inviting the community, preparing the building to welcome children, feeding kids, assisting with lessons, and more. We especially want to make sure we have a “welcome team” to connect with parents and families as they are dropping off and picking up their kids, so we can get to know the community gathered here. If you are called to reach out in this way, we would love to have your support.

Save the Date

VBS Day Camp at Zion

June 16-20

Preschool children—
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Elementary school children—
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Faith Formation

Pastor Veronica Gould

New Faith Formation Committee

Zion welcomes a new committee to lead and guide us in ministry together. The new faith formation committee (Sarah Gall, Judy Gustafson, Alyssa Hart, and Janine Johnson) looks forward to developing a plan to support faith formation for all ages and especially for youth at Zion. Their heart is for intentional outreach, intergenerational community, and a spirit of joy! Thank you for your service and the energy you bring to this important ministry. We are looking forward to what God will do in our midst.

Sky Ranch Sunday and Camp Updates

It's still the middle of winter, but we are looking forward to summer camp at Sky Ranch Lutheran Camp! Sky Ranch is a place where kids, families, and communities can experience the "good life." Away from life's distractions, we can focus on what really matters: God's good creation, his love for us, and our relationships with one another. At camp, we share an experience where everyone is fed and cared for, where we can challenge ourselves to step outside of our comfort zones, and where we can meet God in prayer, in worship, and in the majesty of creation.

Join us on Sunday, February 23, for our annual celebration of Sky Ranch Camp Sunday. We will have camp songs, a special message for kids and adults, camp games for kids, and information about camp registration for families. If you have a friend or family member who might like to learn about camp, this is a great opportunity to invite them! Sky Ranch registration is open to anyone, and this can be a great way to share your faith with others.

This summer, Zion kids are invited to come to camp the week of July 27-August 1. Youth completing grades 3-12 can register for the full week of camp, and younger campers completing grades 1-3 can register for a three-night camp experience.

Lower Elementary	Completing grades 1-3	\$300
Upper Elementary	Completing grades 3-5	\$495
Middle School	Completing grades 6-8	\$495
Rendezvous	Completing grades 9-12	\$535

Each camper will receive an automatic scholarship of \$50 per person with the Zion group code. Additional camperships are also available. Thank you to everyone in the Zion community for your continued support of camp ministry through camperships! Your generous donations make it possible for us to send children to camp.

Sky Ranch is currently hiring staff for summer 2025, and there are many opportunities to volunteer on site throughout the summer.

For more information, talk with Pastor Veronica or go to skyranchcolorado.org

Faith Formation

Pastor Veronica Gould

High School Mission Trip to Chicago

Plans are underway for the high school mission trip to Chicago in summer 2025. With our L2F2 (Loveland Lutheran Faith Formation) mission partners, we will road trip to Chicago, Illinois, July 14-21.

We'll partner with local nonprofits for service opportunities, build community, eat great local food, and see what Chicago has to offer! Did you know that the ELCA Churchwide offices are in Chicago? We will meet with leaders from Churchwide to learn more about the mission of our church, as well as connect with ecumenical partners for service.

This trip is open to all current 8th-12th graders. Participating students will register and commit to attend six meetings prior to the trip. At these meetings, we'll do intentional community building and finalize details, and students will be given some of the responsibilities of planning aspects of the trip.

We are estimating the cost of the trip to be \$800 per person, and we are asking families to pay \$400 total. The rest we will cover with youth account funds and through fundraising! We never want the cost of an event to be why someone doesn't participate.

Registration is available on Zion's website. Please send your \$100 deposit to Zion with your registration.

Any questions? Talk with Pastor Veronica as soon as possible.

College Scholarships

As our high school and college students are discerning their educational futures, we want to make sure they know about scholarships that could be available to them. Thanks to several generous endowments, Zion is able to offer scholarships to new and returning college students in the 2025-2026 academic year.

The following is a list of the available scholarships for academic year 2025-2026:

- The Therp Scholarship is a \$1,000 scholarship awarded each year to one college or university **first-year student with a high school GPA between 3.0 and 3.5**. Preference goes to applicants who demonstrate financial need.
- The Sprenger Scholarship is granted to students who **attend an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)** college, university, or seminary. *These awards are for one year but may be renewed with a new application each year if funds are available.* Award amounts vary each year, depending on market performance and the number of qualified candidates. The amount available for the 2025-26 academic year has not been determined.
- The Petersen Scholarship is granted to full-time students **majoring in education** at any college or university. The applicants must have a cumulative GPA in the upper 50 percent of their graduating class. The amount available for each academic year will vary, and has not been determined for the 2025-26 academic year.

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- The Boyce/Tate Scholarship is granted to a student who is considered a **distinguished disciple**, making outstanding contributions to ministries of Zion and living their faith in the community. Preference is given to applicants attending ELCA colleges, universities, or seminaries, or a religious institution of a denomination in common communion with the ELCA. Scholarships may not be awarded to students at religious institutions not in full communion with the ELCA. If these applicants have qualified for and received another scholarship from Zion, preference moves to applicants who have not qualified for or received another scholarship from Zion.

Application information is available on Zion's website. Go to zionloveland.com and select applications for the four-page application form. For any questions, please contact the church office. Please make sure to have all required materials submitted **no later than Sunday, March 2**. Scholarship applications will not be able to be considered after this deadline.

Thompson Valley Preschool, Inc. (TVP)

Gail Yant, Executive Director

Preschool registration is now open!

It's already that time of year when TVP is beginning its registration process for the 2025-26 school year. TVP is a high-quality, part-time preschool providing the skills necessary for a child to build their social competence and cognitive abilities to be successful in school and beyond. The preschool offers affordable access for families so all children are able to participate.

We have the following classes available:

Prekindergarten	4 - 5 years old	M/W/F	8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Eligible for UPK
Preschool	3 - 4 years old	T/TH	8:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	
Mixed Age	3 1/2 - 5 years old	T/TH	10:45 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.	Eligible for UPK

To register, contact the preschool at 970-667-6552 or admin@thompsonvalleypreschool.org to set up a time for a tour and to receive the registration forms.

Help Wanted: Maintenance Job

TVP is looking for an individual to assist the director in maintaining and making repairs of the preschool building, equipment, and grounds and perform preventative maintenance to keep things running smoothly. Responsibilities of the position are as follows:

- Regularly inspect, maintain, and repair the building, playground, and equipment (e.g., smoke detectors, lights) and may perform yardwork
- Communicate with the director regarding the cleanliness and safety of the building and playground, following safety rules, and ordering supplies and materials
- Document maintenance and repair tasks for the director
- Assist the director in responding to emergencies, e.g., flooding.

For more information or to apply, email Gail Yant at gyant@thompsonvalleypreschool.org or call 970-667-6552.

It's Here! The Nourish Podcast

Joel Brauner

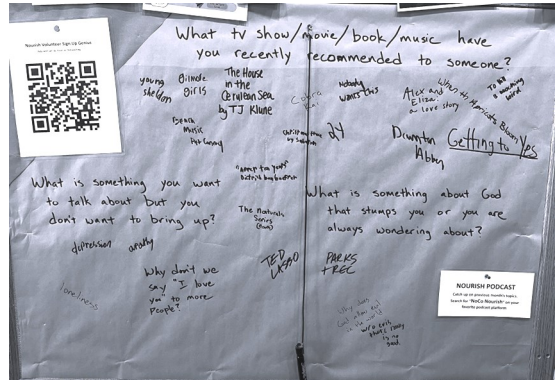
It's here! The Nourish podcast is live and posted for everyone to enjoy. Search for "NoCo Nourish" on your favorite platform.

The "NoCo Nourish" podcast is a great way to keep up with Nourish or check it out for the first time. If you've been curious what Nourish is all about, this is a great way to find out. But the podcast is the tip of the iceberg and is only a part of the program.

If you listen to the podcast, these are the conversations that start Nourish. After this, we have small group conversations around a meal. This is time for everyone to listen, share, and engage in personal conversations related to this topic. And every Nourish finishes with each person answering the question "What's been on your mind lately?"

Nourish is here to provide something difficult to find in the world today. Nourish is a place to have deep, meaningful conversations and support each other no matter who you are. Our group is working to change our community, one conversation at a time. This is the place we practice Jesus' command to love your neighbor as yourself.

Over the last few months, we've been gathering feedback for future Nourish topics. Thank you to everyone who answered the bulletin board questions! For the next topics, we will pair a TV



People responded to the Nourish bulletin board questions with ideas for future discussion topics.

show, movie, or book with a broader discussion question.

Join us for these upcoming topics (dates to be determined).

- The House in the Cerulean Sea—Are people good or evil by nature?
- After Ten Years—Apathy and is it immoral to be resigned to martyrdom?
- Nobody Wants This—Is a common faith important in relationships?
- Parks and Recreation—Does government make people's lives better?
- Young Sheldon—Loneliness and why is it so hard to make friends?
- Gilmore Girls—What do I owe my family?

Scott Sprain, we thank you!

Lindsey Walter



**Well done, Scott,
good and
trustworthy
servant.**

Writing this article is bittersweet, as I have had the honor to know Scott Sprain for 10 years, but many of you have known him a lot longer. Scott has had many important roles at Zion. He makes Sunday morning coffee, tracks and purchases the Fair Trade coffee and tea for Zion and for its members who drink it at home, has led Lutheran Forum

and the Evening Book Club, has held positions on Zion's council, but one of his most important roles (other than coffee maker being a close second) has been his role as Zion's financial secretary for the last 15 years.

Scott, along with Eileen Huddle and Virginia Horst, developed many of the policies to help account for Zion's finances, track them, document them, store them, and present them. If you have ever completed a pledge card or received a financial statement, Scott is one of the people who make that happen. Behind the scenes, he has put in many hours (frustrating at times) calculating numbers to help the Financial Stewardship Team and council accurately project budget numbers. Monday mornings you can find him at Zion, counting offerings from Sunday, after he had properly made sure the offerings had been picked up from Sunday and placed in our safe. Then you may run into him at the bank as he makes sure the deposit is made and the receipts are brought back. The financial secretary role has many other processes that take a minimum of an

hour to complete. For example, he and the team come in and run and stuff your quarterly statements and end-of-the-year statements. Scott has spent MANY volunteer hours, making sure Zion's finances are protected, accurately processed, and confidential. What a great human being!!!

Here's a summary of some of Scott's volunteering at Zion.

- 1986-1993
 - Deacon on council (2 years)
 - Vice President (4 years)
 - President (2 years)
- 2000-2010
 - Member at Large on council (2 years)
 - Secretary (1-1/2 years)
 - Treasurer (6-1/2 years)
- Stewardship Committee (3 years)
- Global Missions Committee (10 years)
- Leader of Lutheran Forum, a Sunday morning current topics discussion group (20 years)
- Sunday opening church and making coffee (22 years)
- Fair Trade coffee coordinator (20 years)
- Book Group (25+ years); Book Group Coordinator (15 years)
- Assistant Financial Secretary (15 years)
- IHN (Interfaith Hospitality Network) volunteer (10 years).

Scott started transitioning his financial secretary role to Amy Brauner this last year and has been

Continued on page 16.

Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord.

—ROMANS 12:11

Ellie's New Assignment

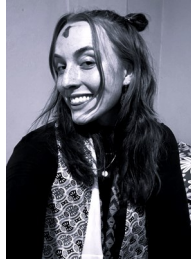
Amy Black

Ellie Black is putting her newly earned environmental science degree to good use by volunteering with the Peace Corps in Nepal for the next 27 months!

Ellie left Colorado on January 16 for Philadelphia where she met up with many other Peace Corps trainees. From there, the whole contingent flew together to Kathmandu via Istanbul where they had orientation on a variety of topics pertaining to life in Nepal.

Ellie is part of the environmental science cohort which is a new division of the Peace Corps in Nepal. Other volunteers will do agriculture or education projects. All 45(ish) volunteers traveled to Panauti, about one hour outside of Kathmandu, on January 24. They will spend the next three months in Panauti undergoing intense language training and learning about the various jobs they may have in their villages.

All volunteers live with a host family in Panauti.



Ellie Black is in Panauti where she will spend three months in training.

Ellie's host family consists of her Ama ("mother") and her Ama's mother. She's hoping to learn some basic Nepali quickly so she can converse more with her host family.

After the three months of training, Ellie will be serving for two years in the Kaski district which is close to the Himalayas, in particular Annapurna. She will live with another host family once there. The area looks beautiful and is a perfect location for Ellie who loves to do all things outdoors, especially hiking and backpacking.

Todd and I are very proud of Ellie and her decision to spend the next 27 months helping the Nepali people. We know it will be an incredible experience for her! Please keep Ellie and her colleagues in your prayers as they embark on this adventure. (We are hoping that Ellie can write about her experience and share it with the congregation at some point, too!)

Scott Sprain, we thank you! continued from page 15.

amazing in training her to assume this position as they work side by side through the pledge and month-end process. Scott has certainly left BIG shoes to fill, but he is confident that Amy, Eileen, and Virginia will be successful.

Many good things come to an end, and as difficult as it has been to "allow" (smile) Scott to relinquish his role, I am very grateful, privileged, and humbled to have worked with him!

Thank you is not enough to say for his dedication over the years, but THANK YOU, Scott, for all you do and have done for the Zion community! We are blessed for you to be here! Please don't stop making the COFFEE!

With great respect,
Lindsey Walter

[a personal tribute that Lindsey said I could share with you]

It is a hard one (like John's) to write, because I love them to death, and they have brought so much to my work environment, but it is hard to write for a newsletter that is short and to the point, and not mushy and with tears (good and bad tears).

Introducing Zion's new members

ROD AND SUZANNE BRAMAN

Both Rod and Suzanne are retired. In his retirement, Rod enjoys photography and playing the guitar. Retired from the pharmaceutical industry, Suzanne enjoys hiking, gardening, reading, cooking, and camping. They reside in Fort Collins and attended First United Methodist Church in Loveland but transferred to Zion when David Dunbar became Zion's director of music and worship.

JANET FARASYN

Retired, Janet enjoys knitting, sewing, cooking, dancing, and reading. She grew up in Minnesota and then relocated to Loveland to be closer to her grandkids. To her, Zion has been warm and welcoming.

W E L C O M E

SOREN, SARAH, NOLAN, AND JOSIE GALL

The Gall family moved to Loveland from Denver to be close to family. Sarah works as an early childhood educator, and Soren works as a technical assistant in the Rocky Mountain region. They like the intergenerational community and the inviting worship environment at Zion and desire to build community with neighbors and faith communities.

SHARON GERRARD

Sharon is retired and enjoys reading, working out, tai chi, movies, and socializing. She has been in Loveland for two and a half years coming from Arizona, but has also lived on the East Coast and in California. Sharon appreciates that Zion has been welcoming

following her husband's death and has enjoyed the grief group and women's retreat.

GREG KRISTIAN

Greg enjoys woodworking, cooking, and teaching. He is currently working with accounting and woodworking. He moved to Colorado from California last February. At Zion, he hopes to share his gifts by making nametags, cooking, and playing the guitar in worship.

KENT TIES

Kent is retired, enjoys volunteering in the community, playing pickleball, golfing, hiking, and traveling. He recently moved to Loveland from Omaha to be closer to family. Zion has provided a faith community for Kent, and he enjoys the men's ministry group.

On bended knee, in the snow, at Horsetooth: a "good life" moment



**Brandon
proposed;
Maddie
accepted!**

New Address for Janice Ehlers



1857 Gyst Road
Seguin, Texas 78155
719-502-9560

lotsofstuff123@comcast.net

Among Members and Friends

At Rest in Our Father's House

Verl Carlson who died November 2, 2024, and whose funeral was at Zion on December 6, 2024.

Chris Holthusen who died December 15, 2024, and whose funeral was at Zion on January 22, 2025.

Tim Barber who died December 18, 2024, and whose funeral will be at Zion on April 26, 2025.

Joanne Sterkel who died January 2, 2025, and whose funeral was at Zion on January 11.

Alvinia Blehm who died January 8, 2025, and whose funeral was at Zion on January 16.

Diana Abraham who died January 16, 2025, and whose funeral will be at Zion on March 8.

Carolyn Smela who died January 20, 2025, and whose funeral was at Zion on February 6.

Christopher, friend of the Gall family

Leng, friend of Maggie Harmon's son

Mike, friend of Jim Pickard

Morgan

Violet, sister of Jim Vosberg

Prayer for Safekeeping

Ellie Black, serving in the Peace Corps in Nepal

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

Thank you for being a supporting congregation of Sky Ranch Lutheran Camp!

We continue to be grateful for your support of the ministry at Sky Ranch Lutheran Camp. Your congregation plays a vital role in collaborating with us to ensure our ministry prospers. We are thankful that we continue together on this journey of living into our mission to be a safe place for all. Thank you for praying for and supporting our gifted and faithful staff.

We must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing.

—2 THESSALONIANS 1:3

Testimonials to Zion's Prayer Shawl Ministry

Thank you so much for the prayer shawl in memory of my husband. I will cherish it.

Thank you so much for the beautiful prayer shawl. It is a reminder of everyone's good thoughts and prayers after my fall and rehab. It is good to be home and slowly on the mend.

Among Members and Friends

*Dear Zion Lutheran Church Volunteers,
Thank you so much for all you have done to support The Matthew's House and The Landing. From getting The Landing ready to open to hosting our teen gift drive, you all have made a huge difference in the lives of those we serve.*

*Thanks again,
Sarah*

*Dear Friends at Zion,
Thank you for your gift this month to LECM. This Advent season, we are grateful to you for the many ways you help care for our students! May God bless and keep you in this season of hope.*

Pastor Monica

*Dear Zion Lutheran Church Members,
Think Humanity is so grateful for Sunday, December 15. We raised \$1,471 (after credit card fees). We estimated that we sold enough for 62 mosquito nets and also used a portion toward our school for teen girls. The girls are refugees or orphans. Many come from isolated villages, so we are helping the poorest of the poor. Of the money raised, 100 percent will go to help in Uganda.*

*Many blessings!
Beth and Jim Heckel*

*Dear Zion Lutheran Church,
Thank you ever so much for providing a warm and welcoming space for Green Hat Society members to gather for evening meals during our recent national event. Pastor Joel, thanks for the extra help making it possible to have internet to zoom our annual meeting.*

*Yours in Girl Scouts,
Chapter 22
Green Hat Society*

*Pastor Joel and Zion Lutheran Church,
On behalf of Loveland Habitat for Humanity, I want to thank you for hosting this year's pie auction. We are deeply grateful for our community's faithful support. The generosity of time and gifts from our faith partners is integral to our vision of building a world where everyone has a decent place to live. Thank you for helping us build homes, communities of hope in Loveland!*

*With gratitude,
Jordan Clegg and Crystal Moore
Community Engagement Specialist
Loveland Habitat for Humanity*

Zion has the most amazing staff!! Thank you for your hard work throughout the year. We are so lucky to have you supporting our mission and doing the multitude of things that make our involvement so much easier.

Jon and Brenda Fosse

***I do not cease to give thanks for you
as I remember you in my prayers.***

—EPHESIANS 1:16

Thank You Letters to Zion

- November 14, 2024—From Alternatives to Violence for a gift of \$75.
- November 25, 2024—From Alternatives to Violence for a gift of \$200. and for supporting Pastels on 5th.
- December 9, 2024—From KidsPak for a donation of \$228.50.
- December 24, 2024—From Think Humanity for inviting them to Zion to sell products made by Uganda women displaced by war; they raised \$1,471.06.

Even in grief there is a good life!

Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.

—MATTHEW 5: 4

As the first anniversary of Elliott's death approaches, I want to again express my appreciation for the many blessings that I have received from you.

Thank you, Intern Pastor Rosalie Brunner, Bonnie Schowalter, and Suzanne Braman for facilitating the Understanding Your Grief class. It was a healing, learning experience, and I sincerely recommend it no matter how long ago or how fresh is your grief. The group became companions for each other with a close, often unspoken understanding that we could bond even with our differences of age, circumstance, and time. We shared a good life!

Thank you for the cards. When a life comes down to only a basket of cards, it is amazing that there are so many different ways to express comfort, concern, and sympathy. They came filled with hundreds of memories and stories of a good life that soften grief into joy.



Thank you for the flowers and plants, some of which are miraculously still alive without Elliott's green thumb and love for God's creation.



Thank you for the food, a banquet at the memorial service. It is a good life when these tangible gifts nourish and sustain us.

The learning curve of grief is that time becomes a blur and plays tricks with the mind. If you did not receive an acknowledgment from me, please forgive my lack of focus. Know that when I see your name on lists and cards, it brings gratefulness for your generosity.

Thank you for the donations in Elliott's memory. Grief does not end, but it is a comfort and joy to know that your gifts will continue to support God and his mission that Elliott loved to serve.

The good life goes on. Thanks be to God!

There are not enough words, although I certainly seem to have found a lot!, to express how thankful my whole family is for your sympathy and kindness.

May we continue to know God's presence and share it with all. THAT is the good life!

WITH LOVE,
Kathy Pancoast

Among Members and Friends

Giving Time and Money



Supporting the Salvation Army at Christmas time, Angie and Maddie Elder were red kettle bell ringers, and John Sterner made a donation.

My family and I want to thank the people of Zion for the outpouring of love and generosity at the death of my sister Joanne Sterkel.

I don't know how people who don't have a church connection get through a death of a loved one.

Thank you again, and I want you all to know I love Zion Lutheran Church and its pastors.

*Harriet Colton
and
family of Joanne Sterkel*

Holy Communion for the Homebound of Zion is a Blessing

I write this in loving memory of my long-time friend Alvinia Blehm of Zion who passed away on January 8, 2025, at the age of 96. The family had a lovely service for Alvinia at Zion Lutheran Church on January 16, 2025, officiated by Pastor Veronica Gould.

For 10 years, I was Alvinia's Homebound Communion Minister and kept a notebook with special pictures of Alvinia and her family during those years. The book came to mean a lot to Alvinia and me, along with her daughter, having fun looking at it during my visits. Her daughter had moved to Loveland to help her mother. Sometimes during my visits, Alvinia's son Clarence came by, so it was another good time for taking more memory pictures to treasure.

Ten years ago, Pastor Sonja Pancoast gave me information on how to be a Home Communion Minister and asked me if I would like to do that for Alvinia Blehm. And I said I would love to!! It was a blessing for Alvinia and also for me.

We both looked forward to our telephone calls and my visits most every month. It was a very special time for us both together. Home Communion was a blessing for Alvinia.

*In loving memory of my lovely long-time friend, Alvinia,
Phyllis Zimmerman (Zion member since 1960)*



**Alvinia Blehm
1928-2025**

Zion's Outreach Set the Example, Led the Way Increasing "good life" participation in our community

Lindsey Walter

Many of you know of our years-long, wonderful relationship with Monroe Elementary School. We supported the Title One school in meaningful—and appreciated—ways:

- Read and played educational games with the children in the classroom
- Assembled homework kits to enhance after-school learning
- Volunteered assistance with vision and hearing screening
- Prepared back-to-school lunches, sack suppers, crockpots of soups for staff on parent/teacher conference nights, and Thanksgiving food baskets
- Delivered numerous gifts at Christmas time specific to children's wishes
- Painted the bathrooms
- Spruced up the playground.

The successful partnership with Monroe is attributable to Zion's office manager working closely with Monroe's Gloria Major, who is the main coordinator for multi-cultural events such as the Pozole gathering held at Zion. Gloria is also a coordinator of the La Familia Center that partners with the Thompson School District. Zion has worked closely with this organization to purchase and provide air mattresses, heaters, and other supplies for families transitioning to temporary housing so they are not sleeping in people's garages and their vehicles.

Our relationship that began with Monroe transitioned to Peakview Academy when Monroe and Mary Blair schools merged.

Our Peakview relationship has since shifted somewhat. While we are still involved, Good Shepherd Church has taken over some of the volunteer opportunities. One of the Peakview parents learned of Zion's reputation for meaningful outreach and decided he wanted his church to help in some supportive roles.

Meanwhile, Gloria transferred to Sarah Milner Elementary School but continues to be a liaison with Zion supporting the La Familia Center. In turn, Zion now supports Sarah Milner with boots and coats for students and parent/teacher conference meals. And, we are still involved with the Pozole event. The meal preparation will be done at Zion while the actual meal will take place at Sarah Milner as they have the needed space. Once LifeSpring Covenant Church, which shares a parking lot with Sarah Milner, got word that Zion was helping with the Christmas giving tree and providing other support, they decided they wanted to step up and help support Sarah Milner with these needs. This allowed Zion to transition their support to The Landing youth shelter across the street.

Zion has now partnered with The Landing and provided coats, boots, and Christmas gifts for the youth as they arrived. Zion volunteers also helped ready the facility by cleaning, organizing, and setting up the rooms and main areas. We are so excited for this partnership! Zion has been a blessing, behind the scenes and a LEADER to connect other churches to bless our past organizations. We are so grateful to be an example in the community as our partnerships grow and we aid other organizations to partner in the community.

The Landing Update

Intern Pastor Rosalie Brunner

The Landing is operational! After many months of preparation, organization, and hard work by volunteers and staff, The Landing, the youth shelter across the street as part of The Matthew's House, officially opened its doors to the youth in need within our community. It could not have happened without many hands and donations from folks at Zion, so let's celebrate the work you've helped accomplish and the possibilities of service yet to come!

When The Landing team at the Matthew's House finally received the keys to the building after all its renovations in early December of 2024, there was A LOT to be done! Loads of donations, supplies, sheets, towels, clothing, toiletries, school supplies, electronics, TVs, washers, dryers, and furniture arrived at the beautiful (and pretty sawdust covered) building. Pastor Joel and Intern Pastor Rosalie were in regular meetings with the folks at The Landing to help determine what support was needed as the move-in commenced. Unsure of what all could be accomplished with volunteers in just three days between receiving the keys and hosting the Grand Opening on December 18, we worked together to schedule volunteers from Zion. You all blew them away!!



The ribbon is cut; The Landing is officially open.

After just the first day of cleaning and organizing at The Landing, the staff ran out of tasks for us due to the sheer efficiency and care exhibited by the volunteers from Zion. Teams worked to divide up and organize boxes and boxes of supplies and clothing to stock the resource center that will be available to both youth staying at the shelter and youth who drop in needing supplies. Beds were made, toilets scrubbed, windows dusted and polished, floors swept and mopped, TVs mounted, and the tasks went on! The following day, another wave of volunteers arrived who continued and completed even more, getting the building clean and ready for what would be hundreds of people to walk through the following day for the Grand Opening!

And a Grand Opening it was! Hundreds of folks from the community, the school districts, those connected to The Matthew's House, staff, volunteers, and individuals who have and will benefit from the care of The Landing all joined together to celebrate the ribbon-cutting of this amazing project. The Landing can host up to twenty-four youth ages 15-21 overnight as well as provide day shelter, meals, educational support, mental health resources, employment coaching, counseling, and care in so many ways! The first youth moved in just at the end of January, so they are officially operational!

So what's next? The ribbon's been cut, and the days of mass cleaning/organization have passed, but this is just the beginning. Zion continues to be in conversation with the staff at The Landing for the ways in which we can support the shelter. As needs arise, we will extend opportunities for the congregation and individuals to be of service. If you have ideas or questions or just want to bake a batch of cookies to drop off one morning, let us know! Pastor Joel and Intern Pastor Rosalie would love to connect you with the right folks at The Landing to share the gifts of this community. Thank you to all who volunteered and all who are excited to continue this partnership!



I'm back!

Here's Bookworm [aka Janie Lichtfuss] once again. And this time, I want to talk about the Zion library and an afternoon book club. Can you tell that I am involved with books? I love to read. Through reading, I enter another world.

Zion Library—The library is very full, and in the next few weeks, I will be working through our treasure of books. Meanwhile, the library is open and available to everyone. When checking out a book, please be sure to remove the card from the book and leave it in the library.

Afternoon Book Club—Our afternoon book club is active again. Here are the books we'll be reading.

- **JANUARY**—**Moloka'I** by Alan Brennert. This richly imagined novel, set in Hawai'i more than a century ago, is an extraordinary epic of a little-known time and place—and a deeply moving testament to the resiliency of the human spirit.
- **FEBRUARY**—**West with Giraffes** by Lynda Rutledge. An emotional, rousing novel inspired by the incredible true story of two giraffes who made headlines and won the hearts of Depression-era America.
- **MARCH**—**The Ride of Her Life** by Elizabeth Letts. A heartwarming engaging folk-hero biography of a woman who fulfilled her lifelong wish to see the Pacific Ocean by riding her horse across America.
- **APRIL**—**The School that Escaped the Nazis** by Deborah Cadbury. The extraordinary true story of a courageous school principal who saw the dangers of Nazi Germany and took drastic steps to save those in harm's way.

We meet in the conference room at Zion on the third Thursday of the month at 1:30 p.m. And, we would really enjoy having more readers join us. Bookworm certainly hopes you are enticed to come.

Biblical Justice

Florence Doksansky

Book Group

We continue to meet and welcome all to join in our discussions. We meet at Zion on the fourth Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

This year's readings are as follows:

- **JAN/FEB/MAR**—**Killers of the Flower Moon**
by David Grann. A twisting, haunting true-life murder mystery about one of the most monstrous crimes in American history: the Osage murders and the birth of the FBI.
- **APR/MAY/JUNE**—**One Dies, Get Another**
by Matthew J. Mancini. A chronicle of one of the harshest, most exploitative labor systems in American history.

Zion's Invitation Task Force

Intern Pastor Rosalie Brunner

Following a robust conversation with Zion's council way back in August of 2024, the desire for more intentional work to be done regarding this congregation's practices of welcome and invitation arose. Thus, the Invitation Task Force was created, led by Intern Pastor Rosalie as part of her internship project, the members consist of Erin and Annaliese Bachman, Clint Black, Joel Brauner, Sarah Christensen, and Amy Moore.



So what does an Invitation Task Force do? Great question! Right now, the team is looking at two main aspects of welcome within and beyond the walls of Zion. First, we are looking at invitational practices physically inside Zion Lutheran Church. When a visitor enters Zion for the first time, how are they greeted? What resources are made available to them? What faces do they see and how are they invited into community with us? These questions have us looking at bringing back greeters as worship volunteers, revamping the Welcome Center, creating informational cards, and lots more!

Secondly, specific to Intern Pastor Rosalie's work, the team is working to reexamine our online presence and ask, how can we make our website and media welcoming and accessible to folks who may be looking at a new church online. These days, instead of walking into a new church each week, "church shopping" may look like families or individuals finding churches online and worshipping virtually before they ever step foot in the building. If that is the case, how does our online presence at Zion extend welcome to those in our community and beyond? These are the questions we need to be asking!

Does this work sound intriguing to you or do you have ideas about any of the aspects of invitation and welcome mentioned above? Please, let us know, or plan to join us for a meeting; there is an open door to the work we are doing! Contact Intern Pastor Rosalie (internpastor@zionloevland.com) for more information, to ask questions, or to offer your suggestions! The work of welcome is not one done in a silo; let us join together to make our spaces places of invitation and community for all!

Biblical Justice continued from page 24.

- JULY/AUG/SEPT—**This is How It Always Is**
by Laurie Frankel. A novel about revelations, transformations, fairy tales, and family.

The book is in Zion's library

The topic of biblical justice is a topic of great interest to me, and I have given the church library a copy of the book that inspired my "Held in Christ" talk last fall. I still have my notes from that talk if anyone is interested. The book is **Reforming Criminal Justice: A Christian Proposal** by Matthew Martens who donated the book to our church.

Reflections from Tanzania

Intern Pastor Rosalie Brunner

I'd like to begin by saying, there are no words that will fully encompass my time in Tanzania. This was one of those life-changing experiences that can be caught in glimpses of photos, but never feels fully explainable to those who were not in the space alongside me. With that being said, I am excited to share with those at Zion some of the work I was able to do, the places I visited, and, most importantly, the souls I met on the journey. Please enjoy some of my reflections on my recent trip to Karatu, Arusha, Tanzania.

For those who may not know or be familiar with the role, I am trained as a birth and postpartum doula. "A doula is a trained professional who provides continuous physical, emotional, and informational support to their client before, during, and shortly after childbirth to help them achieve the healthiest, most satisfying experience possible" (Doulas of North America, DONA). In other words, I serve as a support person, not a medical professional, who provides comfort measures to families during and following the process of having a baby. This encompasses a wide range of tasks and skills that I'm always happy to discuss with folks, so if you have more questions, feel free to reach out!

While doing doula work in seminary, I was connected to an organization called *Wombs of the World*. Their mission is to, "improve global maternal health outcomes by uplifting, educating, and connecting birthworkers," and they achieve this by creating immersive intercultural experiences for birthworkers (doulas, midwives, L&D nurses). Wombs of the World engages communities in Tanzania, Ecuador, Mexico, and South Africa. Some of these programs are more about learning practices from traditional

midwives and caregivers while others focus on serving and learning from populations on the ground in the birth spaces. My trip to Tanzania with Wombs of the World did the latter.

On Saturday, January 11, after (many) hours in the air, I landed at the Kilimanjaro International Airport in Arusha, Tanzania. Unfortunately it was about 9:00 p.m., and I flew out at 1:00 a.m., so I never actually saw Mount Kilimanjaro, but it was not very far from us! Our first days together were filled with adjusting to the time and traveling from the capital of Arusha (the city of Arusha) to the small rural communities we would be serving in Karatu, a few hours away. In those first days we met the staff and toured the facilities of three clinics where we would serve over the next ten days.

The first of three was called the Karatu Health Clinic (Double D) and this was the most centralized, busiest, and most underfunded clinic of them all. Government-operated, this clinic serves the greatest amount of the local population with the least amount of staff and resources as compared to nearby hospitals. There were often many women laboring and birthing at a time with just two or three nurses and the occasional doctor to serve them all and react in the case of an emergency. A building with two large open rooms supported everything from individuals in early labor, those actively birthing, postpartum mamas, c-section recovery, and all the family and community that came with each person and new baby. It was busy. Rarely were there down moments at Double D, and when they did arrive, you were on edge for what was about to come through the door next.

Reflections from Tanzania continued from page 27.

The second of the three clinics was called Karatu Lutheran Hospital because it is partially government funded and partially funded by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (a global partner of ours!). Unfortunately as we came to learn during our time, there was increasingly little action happening at Lutheran. One of the heads of the hospital shared with us that more funding was coming from the ELCT which is wonderful, but it does mean a clinic that had previously provided free care for community members now costs fees that many families could not afford. Unless a person was having a high-risk pregnancy or they chose to pay to have their baby at this hospital, families would often try to find care outside this facility. It was a neat experience to meet so many staff members and local medical students, some of whom were beginning their training to become doctors and nurses at just fourteen years old!

The third clinic we served was called Changarawe (Ch-ang-ga-rah-weh) and it was the newest of the clinics to the area. This government-funded hospital looked impressive and

was in some ways; however, there were glaring problems in the implementation of a facility that was created without speaking to locals about the needs of the community. This clinic was a solid twenty minutes away from the center of town (by car) and surrounded by nothing. Being physically difficult to reach, were a family to receive care there, access to food and transportation is exceedingly limited. But, please don't hear all bad things! One of the most vibrant and excited-to-learn OBs we met worked at Changarawe, and the staff there were thrilled to have us supporting mothers in labor and postpartum. They even have a nurse who is ready to get her doula training and begin a program in Karatu year round!

During our ten days together, our group of six doulas and two facilitators served these three clinics in a variety of capacities. Most primarily, when possible, we were being doulas to mothers in labor, birth, and early postpartum. We provided comfort measures like counterpressure and massage to ease contractions, breathed together while they pushed, and encouraged new babies to latch once mom was ready. Childbirth as a universal rule is

unpredictable and much in the same way, there were some speedy uncomplicated births and some with complications and need for interventions. There are few other spaces where the precipice between new life and sudden death feels so thin and yet we experienced that reality daily in Tanzania. Still other days were unremarkable and brought no new babies during our shifts. Sometimes we cut gauze pads, mopped floors, and helped to take weights and blood pressure at the clinic. That work was good and holy work too as we built relationships with staff and families waiting and watching their loved ones in anticipation. No two days were the same, and as life moved almost outside of time, it needed to be that way.

Despite spending the majority of our time serving and learning in clinical settings, our group did engage in local culture in a variety of ways. When in Tanzania, one has to go on safari and so we did! Guided by a dear friend Patrick, we spent a day roaming the wide open plains of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area which is a massive crater that was formed by a volcano collapsing over 2.5 million years ago. It is

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home to over 25,000 animals including the classic elephant, wildebeest, zebra, lion, water buffalo, flamingo, hippo, emu,.. the list goes on! I captured some amazing photos and some that are tiny and blurry, but I can still point and say, “Look, that blob was a black rhino!”

However, one of my favorite days was when we drove out to visit a local Maasai tribe. This tradition is one established with Wombs of the World for several years where we have been welcomed by a particular community to learn, laugh, and simply be with some incredible people. Upon arriving, the women and children greeted us with singing and dancing where we spent a considerable amount of time in joy and celebration together. This was followed by a plant walk, whereby some of the elder women of the group taught us which foliage they used to treat common illnesses and conditions. Finally, we joined with just the women of the community to discuss all things personal they cannot discuss with husbands or children present. In a circle of women, we laughed and cried, re-enacted childbirth, asked questions, held hands and bodies together, and smiled until the sun set. This was just one of those moments that cannot be put into words, but I will remember for a lifetime.

So, as I begin to wrap up, I have just a few concluding thoughts I’d like to share with you all regarding what I am taking away from this experience. Firstly, community is beyond a necessity of life. I’ve always believed we are not meant to walk through this life alone and have found myself blessed to be in circles of people who are both caregivers and care receivers. With that being said, the way community shows up in Tanzania was beyond anything I could fathom. Mothers and grandmothers, aunts, sisters, cousins fill rooms of women having babies and

the supplies they bring (food, tea, extra fabric) is shared around the room just as the babies are passed from person to person. It is considered rude not to scoop up someone’s brand new baby and when a new cry is heard from the delivery table, the building erupts with cheers and singing. Secondly, however, consensual, beautiful childbirth is a privilege. The way babies are birthed in Tanzania is rough, following medical practices and assumptions that are physically violent and yet, that is how the culture operates. It is not our job to change that with an assumed superiority.

Westernized medicine is what brought many of these, now seemingly barbaric practices to countries in Africa who were already birthing babies successfully for generations before colonists arrived. For us to assume we know what needs to be fixed in the world of medicine or childbirth that we formed in the first place, is a stark over-simplification of a broader picture. This was not a trip for white-saviorism, where the nice American doulas show up to teach communities how they can birth babies better. That was not the point. I was a witness to life and to death. I held hands and backs, bellies, and babies as new cries were heard and new mothers were born. I wasn’t there to teach, to fix, to solve a problem my privileged mind and experience believed was present. I was there to hold space and hold power alongside people as they live their everyday lives. That is a gift and not one I hold lightly.

I think it can be easy for us to see people living life in different ways and in different places, living in poverty or in need, and jump to a feeling of pity. I hope, if you take nothing else away from my reflections on this experience, you hear the fact that I never experienced pity for the

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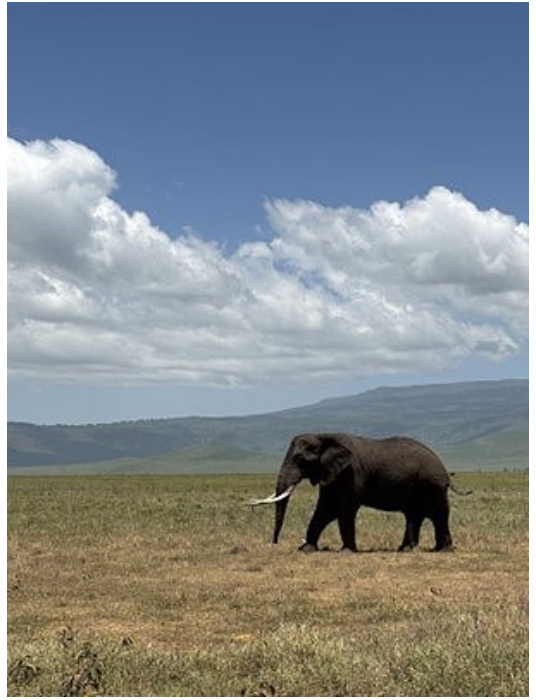
Reflections from Tanzania continued from page 29.

people I met, and I fully believe neither should you. Are there resources that these rural communities do not have that could save lives? Yes. Do we have the ability to fund some of those projects and support our global neighbors? We do. Does that mean they are any less beautiful, capable, intelligent human beings because of what they have or don't have? Absolutely not. If you find yourself wanting to support a project, whether it be locally or halfway around the world, I invite you to ask yourself why it is important for you to do so. If you feel badly for another person or a community of people and choose to give out of pity, then I'd ask you to do some reframing. Communities and individuals in need are most often fully capable, intelligent, experienced people. They don't need your pity and if they do need your resources, it must be done in a way that is honoring their humanity first. Consider this the next time you wonder where to share your gifts.

If you've made it this far, congratulations and thank you for taking the time to share in some of my reflections on this journey to Tanzania. As I've mentioned several times, while the words do not seem to do it justice, I know that I will remain forever changed by the past weeks. I am incredibly grateful for the Zion community and all of the staff who have covered in my absence and surrounded me in prayer as I traveled. It is such a gift to be part of a community who supports my passions both within the church and beyond its walls. Feel free to reach out to connect further about this experience (or to see more blurry photos of tiny giraffes). Blessings to you all as you continue on your most holy journey.

Intern Pastor Rosalie Brunner





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**Evangelical Lutheran
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God's work. Our hands.

Issue 2/25

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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 16	Held Together in Christ
February 23	Sky Ranch Camp Sunday
March 2	Deadline to Apply for College Scholarships
March 5	Ash Wednesday
March 9	Health and Wellness Community Orchestra Concert
March 16	Held Together in Christ
March 30	First Communion Instruction
April 13	Palm Sunday
April 17	Maundy Thursday and First Communion
April 18	Good Friday
April 19	Easter Vigil
April 20	Easter Sunday
April 27	Held Together in Christ
April 27	Chancel Choir Collaboration with Namaqua at Namaqua
May 4	Chancel Choir Collaboration with Namaqua at Zion
June 16-20	VBS Day Camp
