



Eye on Zion

A Quarterly Newsletter for the People of Zion Lutheran Church

August-September-October
2025

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Pastor Joel Pancoast

Pastor

Pastor Veronica Kristian

Intern Pastor

Max Miller

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

Interim Bell Choir Director

Bennett Stucky

Accompanist / Collaborative Artist

Ryan Marvel

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Worship Technology Coordinator

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Bookkeeper

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Beyond the Blessing

Pastor Joel Pancoast

The Bible is full of blessings that God has poured out on people. From the very beginning, God created the earth and took delight, blessing all life with goodness and abundance. God blessed Abraham and promised he and Sarah to be the ancestors of many nations, and throughout their lives God continued to show blessing to them. God blessed the Hebrews in slavery with freedom from slavery and oppression, and continues to bless them with provision through the wilderness. In spite of continued hardship and injustice, God continues to bless. And bless. And bless.

But receiving God's blessing is only the beginning. The most powerful witnesses of blessing continue with God's goodness flowing through the first one to receive that blessing to others. Humanity is given a role of co-creator and steward with God to bless the rest of creation with care. Abraham and Sarah's faith and obedience laid the foundation for many generations to come. Those who were freed

from slavery continued to work for God's desire for freedom and bless others when they face hardship.

Hearing and receiving God's blessing is a sacred gift, but it is also an invitation from God. When we live beyond the blessing, we shift from gratitude to generosity, and from comfort to calling. And here at Zion, this is how God's blessing calls us to live into our shared mission of *sharing God's abundance together to transform lives through the love of Jesus*. We have seen people who have been blessed with God's abundance share healing through prayer or home communion ministry. We have seen youth blessed with opportunity bless others on a mission trip. Some who have been blessed with financial abundance have become quiet champions of generosity, both within Zion's ministries and beyond. Those who have been blessed with gifts of teaching have shared those gifts so that others learn about God's love.

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Beyond the Blessing continued from page 1.

Each of us has been blessed in some way or another. As we live into a new season, I hope you will find ways to live beyond God's blessing for you!

Fall Worship Themes

September 7	Genesis 1:1-2:4a	Blessing of God's Good Creation
September 14	Genesis 21:1-3; 22:1-14	Trusting the Blessing of Provision (Binding of Isaac)
September 21	Genesis 27:1-4,15-23; 28:10-17	Following our Dreams to God's Blessing (Jacob's Dream)
September 28	Exodus 2:23-25; 3:1-15; 4:10-17	God's Name is Blessing
October 5	Exodus 16:1-18	God's Blessing in the Wilderness
October 12	1 Samuel 3:1-21	Blessed to Serve
October 19	1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 51:10-14	Blessed with Clean Hearts and Right Spirits

October 5—Blessing of the Animals

A favorite service for some is the Blessing of the Animals that we share with King of Glory and Trinity Lutheran Churches. Traditionally, we observe this blessing on the first Sunday of October, the closest Sunday to the commemoration of Francis of Assisi that falls on October 4. Francis lived in the 13th century, and gave up his wealthy inheritance to serve the poor and preach the gospel “using words if necessary.” Showing a spirit of gratitude for all of God's creation, Francis became the patron saint of animals. On Sunday, October 5 at 3:00 p.m., join us at Trinity Lutheran Church for a blessing of the animals. Bring your animal if you have one, or come to appreciate and adore other animals.

October 19—Beyond the Blessing Generosity Sunday

Throughout the month of October, the Financial Stewardship Committee will be sharing the vision and mission priorities for our ministry in 2026. We will hear invitations to consider giving to the overall mission we share, including goals for caring for our staff, fully funding the internship program, and adding “The Table” brunch church and invitational practices around that experience into the budget. On October 19, we will be invited to share our ministry pledges for 2026 as we have a special celebration of God's blessing and how we are called to live beyond that blessing.

*Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
And sustain in me a willing spirit.*

—**PSALM 51:12**

Music Ministry

Noelle Bauman-Stucky

Blessings abound at Zion. Every day there seems to be a helpful hand, and giving heart, shared moments that are beautiful and remarkable. This summer was no different as Zion and Trinity Lutheran Churches joined to run a Children's Summer Musical Camp. We played kazoos, danced with fishing poles, made news friends, and sang about the miraculous Bible times.



I want to give my sincerest gratitude to all who led and assisted before and during that week.



MARCIA GREEN is marvelous to work with. Her wealth of experience lays the foundation for creativity and fun. She is great at utilizing the strengths of each child and helping everyone feel successful.

It is not a party without KATHY PANCOAST. She brings the hype and documents it all with pictures. Kathy was our photographer for the week as well as our storyteller extraordinaire. She is always willing to sing and dance with the kids and helps them feel comfortable with their authentic selves.

No matter how confident one is, it is always scary to perform a show with only one week of rehearsal. The last touch that helps confidence, showcases hard work, and makes it possible for people to hear the beautiful story is a good sound person. PAM STEVENS was marvelous at ensuring the performance went off without a hitch. We absolutely could not have done it without her. Special thanks to STIG ORESJO for prepping two more microphones for us to use!

I am very thankful to RYAN MARVEL for helping with some audio technology to make the recorded music accessible to the participating families. It takes a village, you know.

We also had JOSIE and MOLLY as assistants. They were great sports and helpful at every turn.

Each of these people brought with them the skills, knowledge, and personalities to make their contributions meaningful. Their gifts are meaningful and a blessing to all who encounter them.

This fall we embark on a new musical season.

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Music Ministry continued from page 3.

On music staff this year we will continue with Neil Forsythe as our Organist and Praise Band Leader, Ryan Marvel as our Collaborative Pianist and Rehearsal Accompanist, me as the Chancel Choir Director and Children's Music Ministry Director, and new this season we have Bennett Stucky as our interim Bell Choir Director.

All of our ensembles begin rehearsals mid to late August. If anyone is interested in joining these ensembles, please reach out at any time. Email Music@zionloveland.com, and we will get you any information required. Below are the rehearsals for each group in case you are interested in joining:

- Bell Choir—Wednesdays from 5:15-6:15 p.m. Please email for a list of Sunday services.
- Chancel Choir—Wednesdays from 6:00-7:15 p.m.
- Praise Band—Every other Thursday evening and Sunday mornings.

Thank you all for the continued blessings you bring every day by just being who God made you to be.

Looking forward to a beautiful season.

Faith Formation for the Whole Community

Pastor Veronica Kristian

As we kick off a new year of faith formation at Zion, we are excited to try some new things together. We have made some intentional changes in our Sunday School program to try our best to support families as they navigate busy schedules. We will plan not to have Sunday School during Thompson School District (TSD) school breaks and long weekends. We have also planned middle school Sunday School around the confirmation schedule, so that youth will not be expected to attend Sunday School and confirmation on the same day.

Another important change this year is inviting new leaders to lead Sunday School. You do not have to be a teacher or expert to do this. We are especially looking for those who want to share their faith with others through story, song, skill, service—the sky's the limit! We are also looking for adults who would be interested in taking a support role, being present in the classroom, helping the lead teacher, and encouraging children's participation.

Our curriculum this year will be drawing on the gifts and wisdom of our whole community. We have some great resources for those who would like to lead a more traditional style of Sunday School. We also invite your creativity.

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Chicago Mission Trip and the Blessing of Invitation

Pastor Veronica Kristian

Many years ago, I learned from the wisdom of ELCA leaders to think of mission in terms of “accompaniment.” We believe that God is living and moving in communities all over the world. Our high school mission trip to Chicago was a journey of discovering God’s blessing in many communities who welcomed us, in the work of service, and in the creation of community with one another.

One of the delights of our time together was saying yes to invitations. The trip planning began with an invitation from my dear friend, Pastor Chesna, and her church, Second Presbyterian, in Chicago. Because we were invited to, our youth joined friends at Second Presbyterian Church for a concert, for worship, to serve and learn from their lunch program, and for a fellowship lunch on Sunday morning. Because we were invited to, our youth learned from leaders at ELCA churchwide and shared God’s blessing with staff at churchwide by praying for them. Because they were invited to, our youth led devotions each night and encouraged one another in faith.

Even though they were a small group, they bonded well and learned so much together. They also made over a hundred sandwiches to support the lunch program at Second Presbyterian! We are grateful for all the people we met along the way: pastors, community organizers, lay leaders, intentional community members, musicians, even the presiding bishop! So many people are living out their faith in amazing ways, and our kids got to witness that and build their imagination for how they, too, can live out their faith.



On our way to and from Chicago, we stayed overnight at two ELCA churches. One of our hosts who met us, Margeret, used to be a member of Zion! Small Lutheran world :)

Thank you so much for your support and for making this trip possible for our youth!

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Stuff the Truck—Zion Lutheran Church and Homeward Alliance Saturday, September 6

We are collecting winter gear to help the homeless prepare for the upcoming cold months. If you have any gently used or new coats, gloves, hats, boots, socks, or any other items you would like to donate, bring them to Zion on Saturday, September 6. The truck will be parked in the parking lot to “stuff the truck.”

Faith Formation for the Whole Community continued from page 4.

Here are a few examples of how you might share your particular gifts with Zion's youth:

- Teach a skill and share how you use it to care for others (cooking, quilting, etc.)
- Lead a service project supporting a community need you care about
- Share why prayer is meaningful to you—and pray together
- Help kids understand financial responsibility—and explore what the Bible teaches about money, stewardship, and generosity
- Use games, crafts, music, or art as a lens to share a Bible story or faith principle (forgiveness, creation, resurrection, etc.).

We invite you to prayerfully consider how God is calling you to share the gift of faith with the next generation. May we be blessed to be a blessing to these children of God.

Elementary Faith Formation Schedule

September—kickoff and three sessions

- September 7—Sunday School Kickoff (9:45 a.m.) and God's Work. Our Hands
- September 14—Sunday School (9:45-10:30 a.m.)
- September 21—Sunday School (9:45-10:30 a.m.)
- September 28—Sunday School (9:45-10:30 a.m.)

October—two sessions

- October 5—Sunday School (9:45-10:30 a.m.)
- October 12—TSD Long Weekend, *No Sunday School*
- October 19—TSD Long Weekend, *No Sunday School*
- October 26—Sunday School (9:45-10:30 a.m.)

Confirmation and Middle School Faith Formation Schedule

September

- September 7—Sunday School Kickoff (9:45 a.m.) and God's Work. Our Hands
- September 14—Sunday School Fellowship and Devotion (9:45-10:30.)
- September 21—Confirmation at McKee Medical Center (12:30-2:30 p.m.)
No Sunday school
- September 28—Sunday School Fellowship and Devotion (9:45-10:30 a.m.)

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Faith Formation for the Whole Community continued from page 6.

October—one session

- October 5—Confirmation at Zion (12:30-2:30 p.m.), *No Sunday School*
- October 12—Confirmation at Zion (12:30-2:30 p.m.), *No Sunday School*
- October 19—TSD Long Weekend—*No Sunday School*
- October 26—Sunday School Fellowship and Devotion (9:45-10:30 a.m.)

High School Faith Formation Schedule

September

- September 7—Sunday School Kickoff (9:45 a.m.) and God’s Work. Our Hands
- September 14—*High School Worship Party* (Loveland Coffee at 9:45)
- September 21—Sunday school fellowship and devotion (9:45-10:30)
- September 28—Planning and Visioning Session with Pastor Veronica
- Monthly fellowship event TBA (with L2F2 partners)

October

- October 5—Sunday School Fellowship and Devotion (9:45-10:30 a.m.)
- October 12—TSD Long Weekend—*High School Worship Party? Move to 10/5?*
- October 19—TSD Long Weekend
- October 26—Sunday School Fellowship and Devotion (9:45-10:30 a.m.)
- Monthly fellowship event TBA (with L2F2 partners)

Adult Faith Formation

As we are entering into a new season of worship, we will be reading from the narrative lectionary, which offers an overarching view of the narrative of salvation across the testaments of scripture. Throughout the fall, we will be reading selections from Genesis, Exodus, 1 Samuel, 1 Kings, Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel. We will spend most of our time in the winter and spring reading from the gospel according to John.

If you do not already have a regular practice of reading scripture, or if you are interested in trying a new practice, I would encourage you to read the above books, one at a time, from “cover to cover.” We know that there is an overarching narrative in the Bible, and it is also important to understand the narratives contained in each book within the library of scripture. You might consider reading the book before it is preached on, to give yourself greater context in hearing. Or perhaps consider reading the book after the sermon, to explore ideas more deeply or answer any questions you may have.

However you decide to engage with God’s word, I hope you will find conversation partners along the way, through Bible studies, small groups, and fellowship. Stay tuned for more information about faith formation opportunities on Sunday mornings!

Sky Ranch Adventures up the Mountain and at Home

Pastor Veronica Kristian

Some of you may have heard this story already, but when I was in the call process and discerning where God was calling me to ministry, I remembered my sister Daphne had served as a counselor at a camp way out in Colorado called Sky Ranch. When it came time to make a list of all the places in the ELCA where I was open to a call, I included the Rocky Mountain Synod (our synod) because I knew Sky Ranch had been such a blessing in my sister's life.

Three years later, serving at Zion, I look forward to opportunities to go to camp, to train counselors, help lead worship, and of course, to bring our kids up to camp. Whether a child is going to camp for the first time or returning once again, I always pray they will have a safe and fun experience that truly allows them to encounter Christ on the mountaintop.

This year, we also had the joy of hosting VBS day camp at Zion! Please enjoy these photos capturing just a bit of the spirit of joy, creativity, and curiosity I so love about camp ministry.

Blake tries his hand at wood burning during elective time! Electives were a new introduction this year at Sky Ranch. Kids enjoyed getting to choose some of their favorite activities to try.



Kids getting crafty at Vacation Bible School!



Do you recognize this Zion camper even with his face covered? We talked about the masks we wear and how with God, we don't need to cover up who we are. Because God already knows us, we don't need to hide anymore.



Kids enjoyed getting creative with watercolor paints and chalk outside at VBS Day Camp!

Campers gathered together for Living Word time. Each day, they reflected on



scripture together, learning about the way Jesus invites us to live, as real, forgiven children of God.



Children leading worship for their families with a Sky Ranch favorite, "Papaya Song."

The Table—what we’ve learned; what you can expect

Pastor Joel Pancoast

Throughout the summer during the second service time on the first Sunday of June, July, and August, Zion engaged in a “holy experiment” to experience “The Table,” a gathering of worship and a meal around tables to receive and share blessing. After making adjustments each time, twelve people gathered voluntarily to offer feedback. Based on observation and feedback, there is an overwhelming “YES” to continuing The Table, and several people have said they would invite guests. So, we are hoping to continue The Table if we are able to get funding from dedicated accounts, but we wanted to share some of what we have learned and what you can expect if you participate at The Table.

Some of the favorite experiences of participants have been meeting new people or getting to know people better. Time to talk over a meal allowed space for fellowship that more traditional worship doesn’t always provide. During June and August, we noticed a statistically high number of visitors, and we have discovered that even though the fellowship hall was quite crowded during those two months, some people found coming into a room with tables and food less intimidating than walking into a sanctuary for worship.



Acolytes serve to light the table candles from one light.

We also heard feedback about some things people did not like. Based on that feedback, we purchased small communion trays (thanks to Ed Schroeder’s memorial and the blessing of his sons) that are a perfect size for the tables, so that people did not have to choose to drink from the same cup if they were not comfortable. We do know that it may be loud and difficult to hear each other across the tables; unfortunately, there is not much we can do but we will ask people to be mindful of that.

We also know that we have had the same group of volunteers helping for the summer months, so we are hoping to be better about gathering more volunteers and spreading out the responsibilities. Specifically, we have not had much help after breakfast with dishwashing and other cleanup. If



At The Table, worship is conducted through eating and singing seated in groups at tables.

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Beyond the Blessing at the Landing

Pastor Joel Pancoast



The Landing is a youth shelter across the street from the Zion building, offering a safe, inclusive space for young people who are facing homelessness. At The Landing, they find a place to rest, enjoy nourishing meals, and

receive one-on-one support to help secure stable housing—no judgment, just respect and a caring community. As partners with The Landing, we have a beautiful opportunity to live beyond the blessing, sharing God’s abundance with young people in need.

The pastoral staff and other volunteers have committed to meeting with staff from The Landing on a regular basis to plan out the best, most effective and appreciated ways we can help. If you are interested in being a part of those meetings, let one of the pastors know.

For this season, the following are ways you can help:

God’s Work Our Hands (September 7)

One of the five projects for God’s Work Our Hands is making breakfast burritos that can be frozen and shared with the youth as they are on their way out the door in the morning.

Conex Donation Management

Catherine Glaser will be managing donations in the storage box behind The Landing building, but she probably can use other help. These will include clothing, winter gear, and other necessary items.

Parent Cafe Volunteer in the Prison

This is a unique opportunity for a male to accompany male prison inmates once a week who are participating in Parent Cafe to prepare themselves for healthy relationships outside the prison.

Thanksgiving Meal

If someone is willing to host a Thanksgiving Day meal for guests at both The Landing and SafeLot, they would love to have someone to celebrate the holiday with so that they are not alone.

Christmas Decorating

We will host a day after Thanksgiving to decorate The Landing for Christmas, make cookies, and other holiday festivities.

Giving Tree

We will have specific gift dreams from youth for people to pick up for Christmas gifts.

If you are interested in helping with any of these, let one of the pastors know. We would love to share our lives beyond the blessing that we have each received.

*...who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers,
providing them food and clothing.*

—DEUTERONOMY 10:18

Intern Program Appeal

Pastor Joel Pancoast

Sharing our lives and church is a way for us to live beyond the blessing that God has given us. Zion has served as an internship site for four intern pastors, and we just welcomed our fifth! Hosting interns is a blessing to the wider church and the individual interns as we provide opportunity for the practice of ministry to those in their final preparations toward pastoral ministry. However, hosting interns is also clearly a blessing for ourselves as we receive and celebrate the ministry, relationships, and creativity of each of our interns.

The cost of hosting an intern is approximately \$26,000/year. This includes a \$2,000/month stipend for the intern and administrative fees for the seminary. The cost of housing the intern is offset by rent from Thompson Valley Preschool, which uses Zion's former parsonage next door to the main church building. However, due to unexpected and unavoidable increases in expenses, the current year budget only has \$10,000 of the total cost. At the annual meeting, we heard loud and clear that the congregation wants to continue the internship program, so we hope you can help.

One Zion family has offered a generous gift of \$24,000 to ensure the current internship for 2025-2026. To continue this program beyond 2025-2026, the council has developed a plan to integrate the intern program into future budgets, while supplementing the budget with the one-time gift, matching gifts from the congregation, and funds from an account held for staffing support.

We hope you will help! If you have witnessed the blessing of intern pastors at Zion, please consider a gift to Zion's future internship program. Any amount will move us toward the goal of matching the individual donor's gift of \$24,000. Please consider what you can offer to financially support Zion's blessing of hosting intern pastors without affecting your regular generosity through offerings, then contact one of the pastors or office staff and let us know how you intend to give. Gifts may be received as check, cash, online giving, or any variety of stocks, RMD (required minimum distribution), or other investment gifts.

Thank you for your generosity!

Courtney Steitz
2018-2019
Courtney currently serves at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota.



Andrea Kragerud
2021-2022
Andrea currently serves at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Cheyenne, Wyoming.



Katie Elkin Ziehr
2023-2024
Katie currently serves at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church and UNC Campus Ministry in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.



Rosalie Brunner
2024-2025
Rosalie completed her internship at the end of July 2025. She has been approved for ordination and is currently in process to receive a call in her home synod of Lower Susquehanna in Pennsylvania.



Max Miller
2025-2026
Max began his internship with Zion in August. He is from Falls Church, Virginia, and graduated from Duke Divinity School in 2024.



Lutheran Summer Music, a life-changing experience

Hannah Pancoast

My two summers at Lutheran Summer Music (LSM) have been life-changing. I've grown in my faith, my music skills, and my love of music. I have formed such a strong community to support me in my faith journey and my life.



Hannah in front of Chapel of the Resurrection at Valparaiso University.

I've had struggles with my faith over the years, but it has grown stronger during my summers at LSM. I have learned to look for God in everyday life, and while that's something I've heard many times before, I didn't understand the full scope of where I could see God. Now, I see God in my fellow musicians at Lutheran Summer Music and in the act of creating beautiful music together. I see God in my friends and family, both at camp and away from it. And I see God at Zion, in the people who supported me, both financially and through faith. I wouldn't have been

able to return and experience LSM '25 without the generous support of the faith community at Zion.

Music is central to the LSM experience. With morning and evening prayer, orchestra rehearsal every day except Sundays, and recitals every night, I was truly surrounded by music. At LSM, I am pushed to be a better musician, both for myself and for my peers. I was able to play large ensemble pieces, a duet, and a solo piece. I sang songs to be silly with my friends, and I also sang many beautiful hymns to praise God. The people

who attend LSM are all very different, but we all connect through music.

The community at LSM has been and will always be life-changing. The relationships I formed there have changed the course of my life. I originally applied to Luther College because the harp professor at Luther taught at LSM. Because of that relationship, I found the place I am meant to be for the next four years. I met the people who became my best friends at LSM, and I learned that true friendship



Hannah and Professor Amy Nam, the LSM and Luther College Harp Instructor.



Three friends from LSM who will be starting together at Luther College this August (Thomas, Hannah, Ellie).

transcends distance. I have met people similar to me, and people very different from me, and each and every one of them changed me in some way. The staff members, counselors, and fellows imparted valuable wisdom, not just about music but about life. I was able to have these experiences due to the generosity of my faith community at Zion, so once again, I say thank you. Thank you for your financial donations, your love and care, your time, and your support. You have allowed me to have life-changing opportunities, and I praise God for giving me a faith community that supports me so strongly.

The Table continued from page 9.

you are interested in helping prepare, serve, or clean up, please let us know in the church office, but the next time we have a worship volunteer sign-up we hope to include these volunteer opportunities for The Table. We want the meal to reflect God's abundance, and it certainly has! However, we may be able to simplify it by not offering as many side items.

Some people have wondered if this is really worship. If you have this question, please know that this experience is patterned after the ways followers of Jesus worshiped for the first 100-200 years. However, that experience was in people's homes, so it would have been much more intimate. Doing this in a large room does take that intimacy away, but we are hoping we can still find ways to make it feel more worshipful, perhaps with music and occasional silence. We have also heard from some that they prefer a more traditional style of worship, and some who have come to The Table have even gone back home to watch and listen to the traditional worship from that same day. That is okay! We do know that this experience may not be for everyone, but hope you will give us the grace to continue to try something that we hope will be inviting for neighbors and guests.

To that end, as we continue The Table, we are hoping to find ways to invite others to experience this opportunity to get to know others and grow in faith. We will be sending invitations out to the neighborhood, and we encourage you to share those invitations with others. We will also find more ways to encourage further participation in Zion's mission, if guests so choose. We hope you will participate in The Table if it works for you, but more importantly, we hope you will invite people who may not have a church home to come, have a meal, and talk about God. It is that simple!

The Table is Beyond the Blessing!

A confirmation project benefits and beautifies Zion

I am Eli Brauner, and I am being confirmed in October. My confirmation project is to restrain the altar pieces. I hope to have this project done by early-mid September. I chose this for my project because I prefer hands-on activities. The project has been tiring since many of the steps take a long time to complete. Overall, I have enjoyed this project, and I hope that everyone else will enjoy seeing the new pieces.



**Eli undertakes
the ambitious
—and tiring—
project of
restraining
Zion's altar
pieces.**

Thank you, Eli!



Nourish

Joel Brauner

It was another great few months at Nourish as we continued to dive into those questions we all think about. Are people good or evil by nature? What do I owe my family? Is it immoral to be resigned to martyrdom?

Okay, maybe that last one isn't a question I've spent a lot of time thinking about. But, it was a great conversation as Pastor Joel shared about the life, death, and beliefs of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

And you can find that

conversation recorded as a podcast on your favorite podcast platform (search for NoCo Nourish) or use the link in the weekly Zion email.

All the conversations discussing the above questions have been posted to the podcast, and I encourage everyone to listen! A big thank you to Annaliese Bachman, Erin Bachman, Amy Brauner, Sarah Gall, Kip Ottesen, Bonnie Schowalter, and Pastor Joel for sharing their thoughts, perspectives, and experiences!

While the podcasts are great, the Nourish evening is even better. We always enjoy delicious food with great conversations with fantastic people. My favorite part of the evening is always sharing what's been on my mind and knowing that I have the support and prayers of my group. I encourage everyone to join us for a Nourish Saturday evening!



While the podcasts are great, the Nourish evening is even better. Pictured here are Nourish participants giving blessings at the end of the evening.

Beyond the Blessing: Maple Syrup and Friendship

Linda Sterner

At the onset of Zion's outreach to Monroe Elementary School in 2013, John and I (Mr. and Mrs. Sterner to the children and to the teacher) volunteered in Mrs. Shaffer's kindergarten class; we were there for seven years reading with the children or playing educational games. As we sought to be a blessing to them, we, in fact, were the ones blessed as each Tuesday, the children eagerly welcomed us to their classroom with smiles and hugs. At year's end, we treated the children with gift bags (I will never forget one boy saying, "I hope it's not a book!") of stickers and other fun stuff. In turn, Mrs.

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One Year Anniversary of Catacombs

Sarah Gall

When I started Catacombs last year, I hoped the experience would be a blessing for others, as it continues to be for me. Hearing our Pastors' perspectives was reassuring that the experience is impactful in a powerful way.

PASTOR JOEL shares: *I have only been able to go to Catacombs a handful of times, but that is one thing I love about it: Catacombs will be there when it works for my schedule, and I know it will be just what I need in that moment. I don't get (or take) enough intentional silent time in my schedule where I'm not trying to get something done, but Catacombs gives me that. It is time to be centered and grounded with God, sometimes getting lost in the music, and sometimes getting lost in the prayers, concerns, and celebrations of my life, but always getting a chance to listen for God.*

PASTOR VERONICA shares: *When I attend Catacombs, I open myself up to the presence of the Holy Spirit. I joyfully expect that God will meet me there.*

What Catacombs does for me: For me, more than anything, Catacombs is an invitation to pause and *be* with God. Here, I experience the prayer of listening for God, within and around me in the sanctuary. So much of life is scripted, planned out, filled with obligations and to-do lists. It is refreshing to my spirit to be in our place of worship "alone together with God" alongside whoever else is present. Alone, because we do not fill the time with conversation or activity; together, because we encourage one another by the simple and radical act of our presence, which is enough; with God, because we give our time, attention, and love to God in our devotion, and God attends to our spirits.

One more thought: There is so much that the Holy Spirit reveals to us in prayer and meditation that we do not discover by thought or conversation alone. One distinctive memory of Catacombs was being led around the sanctuary and simply standing or sitting in places and extending love to the many people in our congregation who make worship together. What a gift our community is!

Catacombs remains each first Sunday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary and is open to all!

Beyond the Blessing: Maple Syrup and Friendship continued from page 14.

Shaffer treated us with real-deal maple syrup from her home state of Ohio. Monroe has since shuttered its doors, and Mrs. Shaffer has retired. Just by coincidence, I ran into her at Jax and asked, "Mrs. Shaffer?" Indeed. She was soon traveling to Ohio and asked if we'd like more syrup. Yes, for sure! Then this past June, her Ohioan sister visited and with her brought more syrup only this time we insisted to pay for it. The relationship is now a friendship; we're now Mary, John, and Linda and promise to stay in touch. Truly, this friendship is the blessing beyond the blessing. With the recent syrup delivery, Mary wouldn't accept payment but instead asked that we make a donation to the church. And so, we've made an offering of \$26 to Zion designated for Faith Formation with its focus on education.

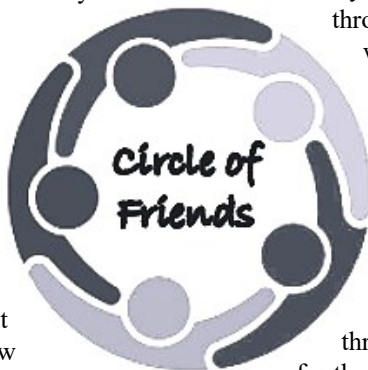
Circle of Friends

Lora Patrick

Want to know the person behind the name tag? Interested in traveling the USA without leaving Colorado? Get ready to expand your religious family through food, learning together, and fellowship. We are doing a reboot of “Dinner for Eight,” a program that Zion had many years ago.

I was in college when I first started participating in “Dinner for Eight” with my friend Carolyn (Flack) Gage. We would meet once a month with other couples from Zion for dinner, fellowship, and Bible study. It was a great way to get to know members of the church. We got to grow stronger connections with others through these meals together.

When Kevin and I got married, we joined a “Dinner for Eight” group as a couple, and it was a great way for Kevin to meet and connect with others. I had been a member of Zion since I was eight years old and I had grown up in the church. It was an opportunity for Kevin to get to know other members and for me to build deeper adult relationships with many members of Zion. We participated for several years.



Since it has been many years since we have had a chance to gather together in small groups in each other's homes around a meal for fellowship and Bible study, we are creating destination dinner groups called “Circle of Friends: Bread for the Journey.” We will eat our way across America through recipes from different states. You will get the opportunity to select a group option that best fits your needs. You can join as a single person, couple, or family. Groups will be selected for you. Each group of 6-10 people will learn about the different states through the food from that region. The groups will meet once a month for four months from October through February (taking one month off for the holidays). Each group will be provided with a “Map to Fellowship Travel Guide” containing recipes, fun state facts, and a devotional guide. We will be learning about how Jesus used meals to connect people together and how he gave us “Bread for the Journey.”

We will have a kickoff gathering on Sunday, September 21, at 9:30 a.m. where you will meet your travel buddies and plan the itinerary for your journey together. Please consider signing up for a “Circle of Friends” dinner group that can build long-lasting friendships and create uplifting spiritual support systems at Zion.

Two Circles join to become the Women's Bible Study Group

The Sarah-Ruth and Priscilla Circles have joined together to become the Women's Bible Study Group. The group meets at Zion on the second Tuesday of each month at 1:30 p.m.

All women are welcome. For more information, contact Eileen Huddle at 970-215-8396.

The Blessing of Women 2 Women

Sarah Gall

For the 2025-26 Women 2 Women season, we will be blessing ourselves and one another with the reading and discussion of the book, ***Living Resilience*** by Native American, Christian author, Kaitlin Curtice. Anyone identifying as female is welcome to join us exploring this beautiful work of literature. If you need Zion to order a book for you, please contact Sarah Gall at sarahdoxygall@gmail.com or 401-374-0704.

Our first gathering will be at Sarah's house (806 Madrone Drive, Loveland 80538) on Monday, September 8, at 6:30 p.m. for snacks and beverages,

before discussing the introduction and first two chapters at 7:00 p.m.

In an era in which "resistance" has become tokenized, popular Indigenous author Kaitlin B. Curtice reclaims it as a basic human calling. Resistance is for every human who longs to see their neighbors' holistic flourishing. We each have a role to play in the world right where we are, and our everyday acts of resistance hold us all together.

Curtice shows that we can learn to practice embodied ways of belonging and connection to ourselves and one another

through everyday practices, such as getting more in touch with our bodies, resting, and remembering our ancestors. She explores four "realms of resistance"—the personal, the communal, the ancestral, and the integral—and shows how these realms overlap and why all are needed for our liberation. Readers will be empowered to seek wholeness in the various spheres of influence they inhabit.

Through *Living Resistance*, we will certainly be a blessing, built upon community, during our nine months together.

Seek the call to identify your SUPER POWER

Dear Church Family,

Are you looking for a meaningful way to serve, connect with others, and use the gifts that God gave you? In the coming months, we will be conducting a search for willing members to join committees where we have openings. We believe every member has something valuable to contribute. Whether you're passionate about hospitality, finances, church planning, outreach, or care ministry, there's a place for you! No experience necessary, just a willing heart!

Time commitments vary, and we'll ensure you're supported every step of the way. Interested? Contact our Leadership Development Committee Chair Amy Black at 970-412-0250.

We will post the desired committee SUPER POWERS on the mobile bulletin board for further information. Let's build the church together, stronger in faith, deeper in love, and united in purpose.

With gratitude,
The Leadership Development Committee



ELCA Churchwide Assembly

Pastor Joel Pancoast

I was blessed to be elected by the Rocky Mountain Synod to serve as one of twelve voting members from the synod to the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, held in Phoenix July 28-August 2. Our church has a presiding bishop, a council, and many other important leaders, but because we believe God's Spirit inspires all people, the churchwide assembly that gathers once every three years is understood to be the highest authoritative body in the ELCA. So there was important work to do as we worshiped and listened to God and one another to make decisions for how our church can best be a witness to God's love for all people. With long days and many votes and discussions, there was more business than can be contained in the pages of this newsletter, but there were a few moments that felt most important to me.

Electing a New Presiding Bishop

After 12 years, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton is retiring, and after five ballots, Bishop Yehiel Curry of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod was elected to serve as our next presiding bishop. As these elections often go, as they began, I assumed I knew who I would vote for, and I did vote for that person several times...until I heard Bishop Curry speak. He was inspiring and filled with the Spirit. He is a leader, a pastor, and a visionary. But he also represents the surprising work that God can do when we are faithful, listening, and open. Yehiel Curry entered ministry "later" in life; he started his career as a social worker, then a public school teacher, then in sales. Finally, as he was serving as a lay mission developer he also was preparing for ordained ministry through the Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) program, which prepares individuals for ordained ministry in the ELCA who are on a

different "track" than the traditional direction, with a focus on emerging ministry contexts like ethnic-specific, multicultural, rural and inner-city settings. When he first went to that church, he did not even know it was Lutheran. He was just invited by a friend. Bishop Curry represents so much of what our church can be when we are open to God's call and share that call with others.

Adopting Social Statements

Social statements are not doctrine that must be believed or followed, but they are teaching statements that give guidance for the church in the world. The churchwide assembly read, discussed, debated, and eventually adopted "Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All" and the edited "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust."

Ecumenical and Global Work

Our church is one expression of the body of Christ. Though we have disagreements with other expressions and denominations, we are always working toward the unity that Jesus prays for (John 17:21). As such, we received greetings from leaders from other denominations and Lutheran expressions around the world, as well as a rabbi and an imam. We also received and affirmed the work of theologians from the ELCA and the Orthodox Church that worked toward common language on one clause in the Nicene Creed that has historically been viewed as the wedge between our churches. After 1,700 years it has been concluded that one little phrase, "and of the son," does not need to divide our churches! Could you even imagine that we would hold onto such differences for so long?!

Continued on page 19.

ELCA Churchwide Assembly continued from page 18.

Memorials

Memorials are “proposals for action involving broad policy issues submitted by synod assemblies to the churchwide organization” (defined by the rules for organization and procedure of the assembly). We read, discussed and debated, amended, and passed 35 memorials! Among them, the memorials that probably gained the most attention related to standing for Palestinian rights and an end to Israeli occupation, and a remembrance for those who suffered injustices of Indian boarding schools. Otherwise, most of the other 33 memorials passed relatively easily.

It was an honor to attend the churchwide assembly, but it was exhausting. I can understand why we only do these gatherings every three years! Overall, I felt an overwhelming sense of hope for our church as we move into the future, that we can and are living beyond the blessing that God has gifted us with.

Sunday Morning Discovery

Joel Brauner

While a church should always be active and alive, the energy of Zion builds and revolves around Sunday mornings. As such, it's important to ensure that Sunday mornings are a source of spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical energy for all of us.

Long Range Planning has been tasked with reviewing our current Sunday morning programs and practices. Zion is a healthy church and our goal is NOT to completely change Sunday mornings, but like a healthy plant, even churches can use a little pruning to become even healthier.

Because we are in a good place, Long Range Planning has adopted a goal of “increasing life-giving activities while reducing life-stealing activities” as we dive into our Sunday morning programming. We can't, however, do this alone. We need input from everyone to know what is life-giving and what is life-stealing at Zion. Be on the lookout for focus groups for everyone to help us understand what makes Sunday mornings at Zion special.

**Help us
understand
what makes
Sunday
mornings at
Zion special.**

Priority items needed by the House of Neighborly Service Boutique

All items can be dropped off directly at the HNS Boutique at 1511 East 11th Street, Loveland.

Monday - Wednesday—9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

CAN OPENERS	KITCHENWARE	COFFEEMAKERS	MICROWAVES	SMALL APPLIANCES	SILVERWARE
TOASTERS	POTS AND PANS	SHEETS	TOWELS	MEN'S JEANS	MEN'S SHOES

From Zion's Office Manager

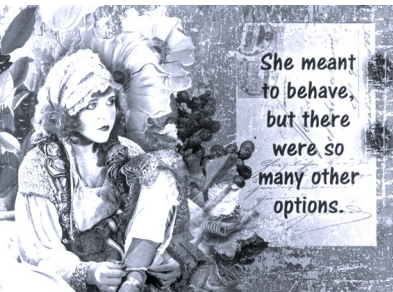
Lindsey Walter

Heartfelt tribute to a faithful servant

When I started working at Zion in January of 2016, I was greeted by many office volunteers. Zion is blessed to have an abundance of people who are willing to jump in and tackle tasks—and they do it with kindness and compassion! Our office volunteers make the serving-in-worship-reminder calls; assemble people for the newsletter mailings; coordinate communion readiness; stuff bulletins with connection and information sheets; mail sermons to homebound; cut, punch, and assemble projects for Sunday morning worship; answer telephones plus support the pastoral staff and me in numerous ways.

And so, it is with a bittersweet feeling that I announce that LOIS JURGENS will be retiring from her office volunteer position of 17 years at the end of August, two months before she celebrates her 92nd birthday. I believe she is the oldest Zion member who still drives herself to worship, women's Bible study, and the afternoon book group. Personally, Lois has been MY ROCK at Zion. Not only has she been instrumental in helping me "learn" Zion's ways, she has also become a very special and dear friend to me and my family. On July 4, we have gone to her house on Lake Loveland, watching the fireworks from her patio, eating pizza, and drinking beer. She has attended my kiddos' volleyball and softball tournaments, supporting and cheering them on. Each year, I find birthday cards to my girls in the mailbox, unique cards addressed specifically to them. Each February, I receive a valentine from her with the distinctive LOVELAND Valentine's

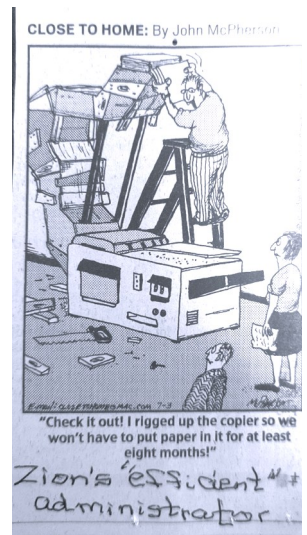
Day stamp.



Lois Jurgens will retire after 17 years as a Zion office volunteer.

you will never doubt where she stands on any issue. I truly love this about her and am grateful that she stands up for what she believes! I am selfish wishing that I could keep her here on Mondays to come, but am glad that we will still be able to visit with her on Sunday mornings at our contemporary worship. Thank you, Lois, for your years-long dedication as a Zion office volunteer and more so for your endearing attentive friendship!

She greets me every Monday, and we share our weekend stories with each other; she brings newspaper clippings of community events and cuts out of the newspaper the jokes that have to do with office stuff. Many who know her, know she has an opinion on everything;



More from Office Manager Lindsey

Heaps of appreciation

To my office volunteers: JEWEL CLAYTOR, HARRIET COLTON, LOIS JURGENS, ELAINE NICHOLS, and PAM STEVENS for ALL they do to help the office run smoothly. Indispensable!

To EVERYONE who has helped with making brunch church successful. Undeniable!

And specifically to:

- BONNIE SCHOWALTER for providing donuts, pastries, and fruit on the first Sunday each month.
- CATHERINE GLASER and ELAINE NICHOLS for their food and cleanup help at funerals.
- DON FENSKE for pulling weeds and maintaining the borders of the parking lot.
- NOLAN BRAUNER for setting up the tables for brunch church.
- RON BUCHHOLZ for doing maintenance projects around the church.
- TERESA MAJESKI for baking the fresh Sunday communion bread and taking photos.
- TERESA and BOB MAJESKI for maintaining the flowers pots at the north sanctuary entrance and the plantings at the east office entrance of the church.
- TERRI and MIKE SLOAN for helping with the grounds “weed and feed” and sprinkler maintenance.

You are never too old to go to camp

Lois Jurgens is 91 years old and hadn’t been to camp in 20 years.

Elaine Nichols is 81 and had NEVER been to camp. They both rode with me to pick up my daughter Hazel who is 13.

Hazel was at Sky Ranch Lutheran Camp for Zion’s week 6. Driving to pick her up at camp’s end, Elaine and Lois accompanied me. Elaine had never been to Sky Ranch and was so happy to experience the outdoor chapel and eat lunch at the chuckwagon. Lois had been to camp about 25 years ago, a time when her granddaughter attended and, too, was grateful to see the new outdoor pavilion, Ruth, and enjoyed lunch at the chuckwagon.



Camp is for all ages. Just ask Elaine, Hazel, and Lois.

Among Members and Friends

At Rest in Our Father's House

Eunice Holthusen who died December 15, 2024, and whose funeral was at Zion on July 14, 2025.

Royce Schultz who died April 27, 2025, and whose funeral was at Zion on August 9.

Janice Pickard who died May 11, 2025, and whose funeral was graveside at Greenlawn Cemetery, Berthoud, Colorado, on June 13.

Christobal Lucero who died May 23, 2025, and whose funeral was at Zion on June 7.

Jim Poppe who died May 23, 2025, and whose funeral was at Zion on June 21.

Marilyn Hinrichsen who died June 16, 2025, and whose funeral was at Zion on June 21.

We pray for God's presence to provide comfort to Judy Gustafson and Gus and Flo Gustafson at the death of Judy's aunts Marci and Laura.

Joyous Celebration of Baptism

Zoey Marie Boudette who was baptized on June 17, 2025, at Horseshoe Lake, Loveland, Colorado. Her baptismal sponsor was Sophia Pancoast.

Joyous Celebration of Birth

Felicity June, great-granddaughter to Phyllis Zimmerman.

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.

Thank You for the Kind Welcome!

Thank you all so much for the outpouring of hospitality and generosity upon my arrival at Zion. The house was amazingly clean and well stocked, which has alleviated much of the busyness of my first week. The mountain of cards and gift cards was a fantastic surprise, and I can honestly say that I am set for meals out for the next few months. On behalf of my mom and me, thank you to everyone who donated their time and gifts to make my arrival special; it is greatly appreciated! It was also a pleasure to meet many of you on my first Sunday, and I look forward to a great year at Zion!.

Intern Pastor Max Miller

Among Members and Friends

Dear Lindsey,

Thanks doesn't begin to articulate how grateful we are to you and to Zion for your hospitality and generous welcome and the work you did to provide so well for us and our family! The food—wow! The setup—perfect! Again—THANKS!

Sue Tjornehoj (Christine and Joel)

I want to thank everyone that sent cards, prayed, and asked about Tom during his surgeries and recovery. You are our family in Colorado, and you showed us so much love and support. The doctors were amazed at how quickly Tom recovered after his final surgery, and I know it was because of all your prayers. Thank you, Zion family.

Joyce Robinson

On behalf of the Kurtz, Holthusen families, we'd like to thank everyone at Zion that helped us celebrate the life of Eunice Holthusen. The treats were yummy, and we truly appreciate your help at this hard time.

Cindy Kurtz

Thank you to everyone who contributed to Marilyn's memorial. I want to let everyone know it will be sent to Sierra's Race in support of meningitis research and to support the Laura Loken memorial.

Al Hinrichsen

Gratitude for Zion's Prayer Shawls

Thank you for the colorful prayer shawl. How very thoughtful of you! It is a lovely way to remember good friends as we settle in our new home and know prayers will continue to support us.

Thank you so very much for the prayer shawl. It is lovely, and I like the designs. Thank you so much for the prayers that went into it at the death of my husband.

How many? 103!



The 103 quilts produced by Zion's quilt ti-ers (knotters) were blessed during worship before being shipped to Lutheran World Relief.

Thank you to those of you who work on the quilts, supply materials for the quilts, box up the quilts, donate to the shipping fund to Lutheran World Relief, and to Lindsey for delivering them to the gathering site in Denver. We will again gather to tie quilts the third Thursday of September. Please join us.

Susan Osborn

Thank You Letters to Zion

- June 25, 2025—From Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for a gift of \$300 to U.S. Wildfires and a gift of \$1,520 for ELCA World Hunger.

Inducted into the Thrivent Hall of Fame

Maddie and Layne Elder



**Congratulations
to Gene Elder
on his induction
into the Thrivent
Hall of Fame.**

The Elder family was honored to be able to celebrate our dad as he was inducted into the Thrivent Hall of Fame at the end of June in Coronado, California, just across the bridge from San Diego. We had a blast enjoying the beach, shopping the shops, staying at a pristine hotel, and attending the wonderful dinner and celebration. Dad was highlighted with a personal video previously filmed in Loveland of his hosting dinner with friends, coaching baseball at Loveland High, and working at his office. We all (our mom, us girls, and our Elder grandparents) definitely shed some tears watching the video and seeing Dad walk across the stage as he accepted this honor. To say we are proud would be a huge understatement. He wears his heart on his sleeve and truly treats his clients like family. We are honored to be related to ***THE* GENE ELDER** and will continue to celebrate his hard work and his legacy at Thrivent. We love you, Dad!!

New Executive Director at Thompson Valley Preschool

After 23 years at Thompson Valley Preschool, Executive Director Gail Yant retired effective July 2025. She has been instrumental in the success of the preschool program, helping it increase its capabilities to include parenting, summer, and outreach programs to better serve its families. At one time, Thompson Valley Preschool was one of the only preschool programs that offered a true sliding scale, giving families at every level of the socioeconomic scale the ability to give good, early childhood education to their children. We are grateful for her work and partnership with us!

In departing, Yant commented, “It has been a privilege to have worked with you over the years, and we have appreciated your services.”



**We welcome
Ms. Natasia!**

Natasia Lovato Garcia has joined Thompson Valley Preschool as the next executive director. She brings over 13 years of nonprofit leadership experience and a deep passion for joyful teams, mission-driven work, and meaningful early learning.

We welcome Ms. Natasia! She can be reached at 970-667-6552 or email at ngarcia@thompsonvalleypreschool.org.



**Gail Yant retires after 23
years as executive
director of the
Thompson Valley
Preschool.**

Farewell Intern Pastor Rosalie Brunner

Pastor Joel speaks for all of us.

I think we can all agree that Rosalie's presence with us for the last internship year was beyond the blessing. We are grateful for the gifts she shared with us and pray for her as she discerns her first call as an ordained pastor. Stay tuned; when we know about her ordination date we will share that, and possibly have a "watch party" at the church if it is livestreamed. Thank you to all who shared generously during her farewell. It was especially fun to hear stories and favorite memories you had to share with her.



With arms extended, Zion blesses Intern Pastor Rosalie at her July 27 farewell party.

Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly Our Report

Tom and Joyce Robinson

Thank you for electing us to represent Zion at the Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly. The assembly offered a lot of activities—from welcoming a new church from Castle Rock during worship at St. Paul's Lutheran Church and installation of the bishop's new staff to voting on resolutions and memorials. The breakout sessions were very informative and included presentations on Luther House, Madagascar Companion Synod, and My Father's House. It is amazing how many different organizations the Rocky Mountain Synod supports. We also met people from all over the synod and got to make new friends. If you would like to hear more about the assembly, please ask us!

The Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly was held May 22-24, 2025, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. They gathered under the theme "Dios está aquí. God is Here." This powerful reminder of God's ever-present spirit shaped three days of worship, learning, storytelling, and visioning for the future of ministry across the synod.

A link for the synod publication: https://rmselca.org/sites/rmselca.org/files/media/2025_synod_assembly_overview.pdf;)

Go to page 31 of this newsletter for Pastor Veronica's Synod Assembly report.

Zion Evening Book Group Selections

Jaci Engel

SEPTEMBER—*How to Change Your Mind: What the New Science of Psychedelics Teaches Us About Consciousness, Dying, Addiction, Depression, and Transcendence* by Michael Pollan, 2019, 464 pages, Nonfiction.

When Michael Pollan set out to research how LSD and psilocybin (the active ingredient in magic mushrooms) are being used to provide relief to people suffering from difficult-to-treat conditions such as depression, addiction, and anxiety, he did not intend to write what is undoubtedly his most personal book. But upon discovering how these remarkable substances are improving the lives not only of the mentally ill but also of healthy people coming to grips with the challenges of everyday life, he decided to explore the landscape of the mind in the first person as well as the third. Thus began a singular adventure into various altered states of consciousness, along with a dive deep into both the latest brain science and the thriving underground community of psychedelic therapists. Pollan sifts the historical record to separate the truth about these mysterious drugs from the myths that have surrounded them since the 1960s, when a handful of psychedelic evangelists inadvertently catalyzed a powerful backlash against what was then a promising field of research.

A unique and elegant blend of science, memoir, travel writing, history, and medicine, *How to Change Your Mind* is a triumph of participatory journalism. By turns dazzling and edifying, it is the gripping account of a journey to an exciting and unexpected new frontier in our understanding of the mind, the self, and our place in the world. The true subject of Pollan's "mental travelogue" is not just psychedelic drugs but also the eternal

puzzle of human consciousness and how, in a world that offers us both suffering and joy, we can do our best to be fully present and find meaning in our lives.

We meet on Thursday, September 18, at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Brenda Fosse, 3180 Challenger Point, Loveland, CO 80538.

OCTOBER—*James: A Novel* by Everett Ruess, 2024, 320 pages, Fiction.

When Jim overhears that he is about to be sold to a man in New Orleans, separated from his wife and daughter forever, he runs away until he can formulate a plan. Meanwhile, Huck has faked his own death to escape his violent father. As all readers of American literature know, thus begins the dangerous and transcendent journey by raft down the Mississippi River toward the elusive and unreliable promise of the Free States and beyond.

Brimming with the electrifying humor and lacerating observations that have made Everett a literary icon, this brilliant and tender novel radically illuminates Jim's agency, intelligence, and compassion as never before. *James* is destined to be a major publishing event and a cornerstone of twenty-first century American literature.

We meet on Thursday, October 16, at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Wes Melander and Jaci Engel, 4110 Bonnell Drive, Loveland, CO 80537.

NOVEMBER—*The Exceptions: Nancy Hopkins, MIT, and the Fight for Women in Science* by Kate Zernike, 2023, 432 pages, Nonfiction.

Zion Evening Book Group Selections continued from page 26.

In 1963, a female student was attending a lecture given by Nobel Prize winner James Watson, then tenured at Harvard. At nineteen, she was struggling to define her future. She had given herself just ten years to fulfill her professional ambitions before starting the family she was expected to have. For women at that time, a future on the usual path of academic science was unimaginable—but during that lecture, young Nancy Hopkins fell in love with the promise of genetics. Confidently believing science to be a pure meritocracy, she embarked on a career.

In 1999, Hopkins, now a noted molecular geneticist and cancer researcher at MIT, divorced and childless, found herself underpaid and denied the credit and resources given to men of lesser rank. Galvanized by the flagrant favoritism, Hopkins led a group of sixteen women on the faculty in a campaign that prompted MIT to make the historic admission that it had long discriminated against its female scientists. The sixteen women were a formidable group: their work has advanced our understanding of everything from cancer to geology, from fossil fuels to the inner workings of the human brain. And their work to highlight what they called “21st -century discrimination”—a subtle, stubborn, often unconscious bias—set off a national reckoning with the pervasive sexism in science.

From the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who broke the story, *The Exceptions* chronicles

groundbreaking science and a history-making fight for equal opportunity. It is the “excellent and infuriating” (The New York Times) story of how this group of determined, brilliant women used the power of the collective and the tools of science to inspire ongoing radical change. And it offers an intimate look at the passion that drives discovery, and a rare glimpse into the competitive, hierarchical world of elite science—and the women who dared to challenge it.

We meet on Thursday, November 20, at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Florence Dokansky, 3695 Leopard Street, Loveland, CO 80537.

JANUARY—*Americanah: A Novel* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, 2014, 588 pages, Fiction.

Ifemelu and Obinze are young and in love when they depart military-ruled Nigeria for the West. Beautiful, self-assured Ifemelu heads for America, where despite her academic success, she is forced to grapple with what it means to be Black for the first time. Quiet, thoughtful Obinze had hoped to join her, but with post-9/11 America closed to him, he instead plunges into a dangerous, undocumented life in London.

We meet on Thursday, January 15, at 7:00 p.m. Location TBD.

Note: Book selections for February through May 2026 will be published in the next issue of the Eye on Zion.

Read the best books first, or you may not have a chance to read them at all.

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU

We read to know that we are not alone.

—C.S. LEWIS



Custodial topic for this quarter: how the Psalms relate to being a custodian

Ronda Buck

Happy New Quarter! This quarter's topic, I thought about while studying the Psalms this summer. Not necessarily the Psalms we studied, but I started thinking about other Psalms and how they kind of relate to being a custodian. Let's consider Psalm 23, for instance. I was thinking about "I shall not want," "He makes me to lie down in green pastures," "He leads me beside still waters," "He restores my soul," and the other lines "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death," "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." What in the world, you are probably thinking, does any of this have to do with custodial duties.

I got to thinking about the word "intentionality" and thought about my Sunday School teaching days, working with the kids to learn and understand Psalm 23. Take the first phrase, "I shall not want." I feel like the author was intentionally stating this first. In my work as a custodian, I am often approached by people wanting a variety of things—toilet paper, paper towels, crackers, more bulletins, information, etc. I got to wondering about how intentionally we observe our church and all its surroundings. Have you noticed how many signs we have around the church? The bulletin boards? What are they for? What do they say? I am thinking,

what might happen if we slowed down and intentionally paid attention to our environment. We might be able to make our space less "wanting." Let me give a few specific examples.

The kitchen is a very important area with lots of signs: health code signs, item location labels, safety signs. Perhaps there are so many signs that we forget the importance of the information they provide. These signs are kind of the "rod and the staff"—the rules, the laws, the guidance—that allow us to feel comfort in the cleanliness, safety, fiscally responsible ways we care for the things we have been given. Two specific sinks in the kitchen, for example, have signs posted saying "Hand Washing Sink Only." However, food particles are often in them from rinsed dishes/cups, coffee stains from rinsed/cleaned pots and coffee ground containers. This seems small, but the lack of intentionality in paying attention to the signs could lead to violations in health safety codes for the kitchen.

Another example is the commercial stove/oven. Signs and guidelines/directions are all over to guide us in the proper use of the commercial gas stove/ovens; however, frequently it is quite evident that the notices are intentionally not followed. We have pilot lights continually turned off; a few times the whole gas line has been shut down. Not demonstrating the intentionality of

Custodial topic for this quarter: how the Psalms relate to being a custodian continued from page 28.

reading the signs/information, in this case, could cause an extensive safety issue in addition to the inconvenience of not being able to fully use our facilities properly.

My final example has somewhat of a financial poke to it. We have two recycling bins in the kitchen, at the end of the center counters. They are labeled “Trash” and “Recycle.” There seems to be a ton of confusion about what can/cannot go into these receptacles. According to the City of Loveland website, there are intentional rules about what can be recycled. When any item is placed in the recycle bin that is not allowed, it contaminates the whole lot and all of it becomes trash. For example, all recyclables must be clean of ALL food—not a speck, not grease on a pizza box, not any liquid of any kind in any containers, not used napkins/paper towels, no plastic bags of any kind, no Styrofoam. Why is this intentionality financial? When our recycling is contaminated, it adds to our trash amounts. Our church is soooooo busy, we fill our large trash dumpster to the brim every week! When we add contaminated items (that should be able to go into the recycle dumpster) to our already full trash dumpster, we get charged each time they determine we are “over-filled.” Of course, the recycling alone doesn’t account for all the extra trash. This summer alone, we have had people (not necessarily Zion people) dumping their trash—unwanted construction materials, furniture, trashcans, and a variety of other large items—in the Zion dumpster. So guess what we are adding? Another sign with

directions/warnings about illegal dumping in our dumpsters. If we are not intentional about reading these signs, the fine is substantial.

Where was I going with this custodial stuff and the Psalms? Well, we have all our needs/wants taken care of by the Lord. Who is taking care of what the Lord has given us? We should be—with intentionality. Our still waters and green pastures need to be taken care of in order to remain still and green. That is our job, our commitment to taking care of what God has given us—at all times and in all things. Our willingness to care for all that we have been given restores our souls—gives us peace and calm and welcoming spaces, makes us grateful for what we have, and proud of the way we take care of it.

Upon reading this again, there may be quite a large “valley of the shadow of death” message in here. This is not my intent, but I do want a reminder for myself as well, that we as humans often create our own bad stuff—increased costs in trash dumping, unclean/unsafe facilities—all because we aren’t intentional in our actions in our everyday lives.

Our cup does runneth over at Zion. Let’s commit to experiencing what God has given us with intentionality and attention to detail so that goodness and mercy can truly follow us all the days of our lives at Zion.

With grace, Ronda

Chicago Mission Trip and the Blessing of Invitation continued from page 5.



We visited with the Fireside Intentional Community in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago. Students learned about the call to faithful living in whatever communities they find themselves (family, congregation, school). Along the way, we realized that our mission trip group was a kind of "intentional community" in the way we had gathered and made commitments to one another! We reflected on the story of the early church in Acts 2:42-47.



We gathered together at ELCA churchwide, where we had the opportunity to worship together with missionaries who are being sent out all over the world. Pastor Gabi Aelabouni was the preacher, and he shared with us about ministry in the Holy Land, the Middle East, and North Africa. Our students reflected on Jesus's gospel mission from Luke 4 and imagined together how the church today can be a part of that mission.

Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly

Pastor Veronica Kristian

Leaders from our synod gathered in May for the Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Our theme for the gathering was “Dios esta aqui” (“God is here”). We celebrated new ministries, honored holy closure, and witnessed God’s incredible spirit of resurrection in the stories of congregations who are finding new life through ministries of outreach.

During the assembly, pastors, deacons, lay leaders, students from campus ministry, and representatives from various specialized ministries discerned together and voted on one memorial and three resolutions. The memorial, which was passed on to the churchwide assembly for consideration, urged the ELCA and the US government to support peace efforts and human rights and review military aid in Palestine and Israel. The memorial also advocated for Palestinian statehood. It was approved by the synod assembly and passed on to the ELCA churchwide assembly.

The three resolutions regarded:

1. support for campus ministries of the ELCA
2. honoring Indigenous American peoples
3. reaffirming the synod’s Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Commitment to LGBTQIA+ inclusion.

All of the resolutions passed in the assembly and are adopted by the Rocky Mountain Synod.

I know that many people sometimes worry about the future of the institutional church. We hear reports of decline in membership and leadership. I understand the worry. I am also encouraged by those who are leading in new ways in the face of these challenges. I was especially encouraged by stories of congregations raising up lay preachers, worship leaders, and caregivers to meet the needs of the church where pastors are not available. Zion has been blessed to be able to call ordained pastors to serve here. But the blessings of God are always full of new surprises, and I wonder what new life the lay leadership development program in our synod will offer to the wider church. Please keep these ministers and congregations in your prayers, as they are often serving congregations with fewer resources. Dios esta aqui, God is here, too.

Journeys of Paul Pilgrimage

Pastor Joel Pancoast

In mid-June, 33 pilgrims were blessed to travel together in pilgrimage to Greece and Turkey. Truly an intergenerational trip, pilgrims ranged from 13 to 82 years old. Most were from Zion, but we also had members from Trinity and King of Glory Lutheran Churches, plus others from Georgia, North Dakota, and Texas. After our return home, many people asked what my favorite place was, but actually, my favorite experience of these pilgrimages is less about being in a certain place than it is about seeing the group of pilgrims grow together as friends and siblings in Christ. However, I want to share some photos of some of those meaningful experiences.

Our group in Philippi, where Paul met Lydia, who persuaded him to baptize her and her entire household (Acts 16). She was the first European convert to Christianity, making it possible for us to be followers of Jesus today. At Philippi, we gave thanks for Paul and Lydia's witness to God's gift of baptism and for our own baptisms in the same river where Lydia was baptized.



Our group of pilgrims at Philippi.

The pedestal is where Paul preached and was welcomed in Berea, where the people read the Scriptures daily (Acts 17). Paul and his companions came to Berea after the people in Thessalonica were angry at them, and a riotous mob ran them out of town. Of course this monument was not there when Paul was, but they have placed this to recognize this town's welcome reception of Paul and God's Word that he brought to them. To this day, the people of Berea are enthusiastic about Paul and welcoming pilgrims on Paul's journey.

Continued on page 33.

Journeys of Paul Pilgrimage continued from page 32.



This pedestal monument was placed to recognize this town's welcome reception of Paul and God's Word that he brought to them.

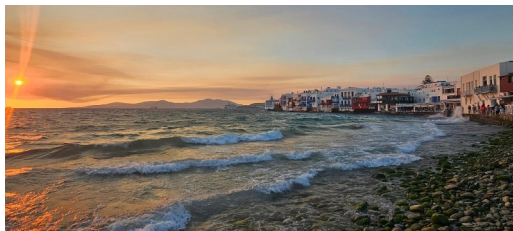


Mars Hill

Standing on Mars Hill, we looked up the Acropolis to the Parthenon. This is where Paul noted "how religious" the people of Athens were because they had temples and altars to every God imaginable. But in one place, he found an altar with an inscription that said "To an unknown God," and this gave Paul an opportunity to tell them about the God of creation who is known through Jesus Christ, a God of life and love and resurrection (Acts 17).

Then we boarded a cruise ship to visit a number of the Greek islands that Paul visited.

Mykonos is called the "little Venice" of Greece.



Mykonos

Ephesus is one of the most well preserved ancient Greek cities (in modern day

Turkey). Paul stayed here for almost 3 years. It is also the place where one of the early church councils took place to reinforce that Jesus is "true God from true God," one person who was both fully divine and fully God, and that Mary was *theotokos*, the bearer of God.



Ephesus

Continued on page 34.

Journeys of Paul Pilgrimage continued from page 33.

We stopped for a short devotion on the island of Patmos, where John was exiled in a cave and received a revelation from God, which he wrote down to share with Christians to give them hope in trying times (known by most as Revelation, the last book of the Bible).



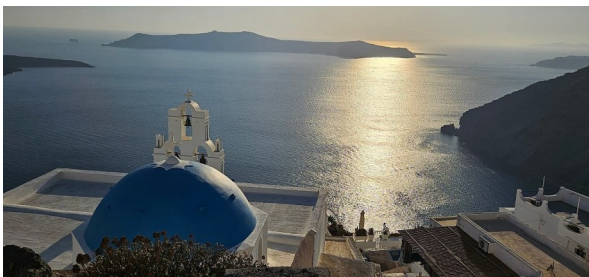
Patmos

Crete is a spectacular island where Paul stopped several times, especially when he was being transported to Rome as a prisoner (Acts 27). He left Titus there to attend to the churches (Titus 1). Titus is revered so much that his skull is encased in a gold throne as a holy relic!



Titus' Skull as a Holy Relic

Santorini doesn't have much significance to Paul's journeys, but it is a beautiful island produced by a volcanic caldera.



Santorini

Back on mainland

Greece, we visited Corinth, which was one of the most important cities of ancient Greece because of its location on the isthmus between the Aegean and Ionian Seas, connecting central Greece with the Peloponnesian Peninsula. People have lived in this

location for over 8,000 years. Paul spent about 18 months in Corinth, befriending Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18, Romans 16, 1 Corinthians 16, and 2 Timothy 4), who had been deported from Rome because of their faith and gathered people in their home for worship. Every Saturday Paul would preach and teach about Jesus. Corinth was our last



Celebrating Holy Communion at Corinth.

Continued on page 35

Journeys of Paul Pilgrimage continued from page 34.



Corinth was the last main stop on the pilgrimage.



The group in front of the Hagia Sophia (meaning "holy wisdom") in Istanbul, one of the most significant churches built in human history. At the crossroads between many cultures and religion, the Hagia Sophia has been a church, a mosque, and a museum at different times in history.



Street of the Knights of the Order of Jerusalem in Rhodes.

main stop on the pilgrimage, so while we were there we gathered for worship to celebrate Holy Communion, which was meaningful considering some of our most comprehensive teachings about the sacrament were from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 11).

After Corinth, half of the group returned home, and the other half took advantage of the proximity to the amazing cultural city of Istanbul, where we visited many sites of early church significance (but after Paul's time), as well as sites of significant clashes between cultures and religions.

It was a blessing to be able to take this pilgrimage with 32 other people of faith, growing in their faith and understanding of the way God's Word is spread throughout history and place.

I am grateful for the opportunity and the blessing!



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

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YouTube: Zion Lutheran Church Loveland

Join Us in Worship

Fall hours begin September 7.

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

10:45 a.m. Contemporary Worship
In Person or Zoom
except for The Table
Brunch Church Sundays
(see below)

10:45 a.m. The Table Brunch Church
In Person
September 7, October 5,
November 2

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**

Issue 8/25

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

September 6	Stuff the Truck
September 7	Sunday School Kickoff The Table Brunch Church God's Work. Our Hands. Sunday
September 8	Women 2 Women
September 18	Quilt Ti-ers Zion Evening Book Group
September 21	Circle of Friends Kickoff
October 5	The Table Brunch Church
October 16	Zion Evening Book Group
November 2	The Table Brunch Church
November 20	Zion Evening Book Group
January 15	Zion Evening Book Group