

# Zion Lutheran Church

## Newsletter

### December 2023



Forgiveness of sins is central to life in the Church. The means of grace deliver the forgiveness of sins, and Christ instituted many ways in which the removal of sin is applied to our lives. We have been freely forgiven for Christ's sake, utterly and completely justified. What a comfort and joy! Paul instructs the church to live at peace with one another, in so far as it depends on us, and our Lord commands us to forgive as we have been freely forgiven. This gives our sinful flesh difficulty and requires further drowning.

Sin is experienced in many shapes and sizes, and the stain of iniquity ranges from dingy yellow to jet black. The same thoughtless words might brush off easily for one individual while for another they seem to soak in and break the heart. Some sin is so beyond the pale of normal behavior that forgiveness would seem a bridge too far. The devil loves nothing more than to burden your conscience, stir up anger and division, and mute the words of forgiveness in our lives.

I would find it difficult to believe there is a single Christian in the history of life on earth that has not struggled dealing with forgiveness and reconciliation: if not in themselves, then the effects felt by others they love; if not holding on to sins committed by others, it's being plagued by the guilt of our own sins of the past. The perfect peace of Christ seems more challenging to acquire than seems possible could be found in the forgiveness of sins: it seem too simple, too easy, for the messy, complicated situations sin sinks us into.

Nonetheless, we are commanded by Christ to forgive as we have been forgiven.

In reality, sin is not so simple a problem that speaking can solve in itself. Recall what Christ says when He declares the sin of the paralyzed man forgiven as some begin to grumble that Jesus speaks blasphemy by doing so: "Which is easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Rise up and walk.'?" In truth, the forgiveness is not easy to speak and actually speak truth. God is loving and God is good, therefore He hates evil and all its effects. Therefore, God is also just: He doesn't, indeed cannot, turn a blind eye to sin. The wages of sin is death and separation from His presence. The only way Jesus can forgive sin is by taking them upon Himself and doing the hard work of Good Friday suffering and dying.

Forgiveness isn't cheap, but is freely given to the world in the blood of Christ shed. You are bathed in this forgiveness in Baptism, you are fed it in His Supper, you rise up and walk in it every time God's peace is relayed to you through the Absolution from pastor or brother or sister in Christ. These are not mere words, but the Spirit-filled, blood-bought words of Christ that really do forgive sins and bring peace and healing.

**I encourage you to attend a Bible Study that will be beginning some time in January at Zion (Stay tuned for more details). We will be going through a new book put out by CPH called *Unforgivable: How God's Forgiveness Transforms Our Lives*. This book raises questions you may have been asked or struggled with the answer yourself at some time. Some of these are "What if they don't repent?"; "What if I have forgiven but still feel hurt or angry?"; "What if others won't forgive me?"; "What if I can't forgive myself?"; "What about abuse?"; and "What about justice?". As the experiences of the lives of fellow saints and the effects of Scriptures that are brought to bear are described in the book we will explore the ways in which we can live forgiven, forgiving lives and perhaps begin to provide answers to those in our lives who struggle as well.**

God's blessings be to you as we celebrate the coming of our Lord this Advent and may the peace of Christ dwell in you richly.

Your servant in Christ,

Pastor Siebert



### **Advent Begins Sunday, December 3, 2023.**

Advent services will be held at 12 Noon and 7:15 PM beginning on Wednesday, December 6. A meal will be served from 5:45-6:30 prior to the evening service on December 6. The menu will be casseroles, salad and desserts. Providing the meal will be LLL, LWML and Altar Guild members. There will not be meals served on December 13 and December 20.

**Christmas Eve Service with Holy Communion** will be on Sunday, December 24 at 6:00 PM

**Christmas Day Service with Holy Communion** will be on Monday, December 25 at 9:00 AM.

### **Thank You**

The funeral committee wants to thank those who helped with set-up, serving, donating food, cleaning up and tearing down. Your help and support are most appreciated.  
RoGene and Janey



**Angel Tree Ministry**, along with the members of Zion continue to be involved in this heart-warming program. By selecting a child's name and purchasing a Christmas gift on behalf of their incarcerated parent, you can make their Christmas a little brighter. Bring the wrapped gift (approximate cost of \$25.00) back to the church by Friday, December 15. Volunteers will deliver the gifts.

Thank you for your generosity! We couldn't do it without you.

Rhonda Voboril, project coordinator for Zion.

### **December Events**

**December 2:** 8:00 to 12:00 Altar Guild Cookie Walk

**December 3:** 6:30 PM Christmas Abendmusik at Zion Wanda Lutheran Church

**December 5:** 6:00 PM Zion Classical Academy Christmas Program

**December 9:** 9:00 AM LWML-Men's Bible Study Christmas Breakfast

**December 17:** 9:00 AM Sunday School Presentation during the Worship Service

**December 24:** 6:00 PM Christmas Eve Service with Holy Communion

**December 25:** 9:00 AM Christmas Day Service with Holy Communion

**December 30:** 7:00 PM Pre-New Years Food, Fun and Fellowship

### **Kingesepp Orphanage**

Included this month is a letter from "The Reehl Mission Vision", the nonprofit organization established to continue Pastor John Reehl's commitment to "Bringing the love of Jesus to those most in need through humanitarian items and the words of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ" as stated in its Mission statement. Zion Lutheran Church will continue to support our orphanage in Kingesepp. The annual amount requested to support the orphanage is \$3,360. A door offering will be collected for our orphanage during the month of December. If you would like make a donation by check, you can do so by making a check out to "The Reehl Mission Vision" or by making a check out to Zion Lutheran Church and clearly designating it for our orphanage on the memo line or on your envelope. You may also designate your gift as a special Christmas gift for the orphanage.

## **2023 Zion Improvement Projects**

It is with much thankfulness to our Triune God, that Zion Lutheran Church has been able to complete various projects to maintain and beautify our property, both inside and outside our building. Below is a list of some of the accomplishments this past year.

Converting an area in the southwest corner of the narthex into Pastor's Study

Removal of all old heating-cooling units throughout the building

Converted all heating-cooling unit electrical power source boxes to usable 4-outlet plug-ins throughout the building

Removed (harvested) from old heating-cooling units all electrical condensers, copper pipes and copper wire

Removed copper pipes and brass valves above of the ceilings in the library, art room, storage room and boiler room

Basement beneath the altar area: removed the old school showers, toilets and sinks; installed shut-off valves and capped pipes that supplied water to this area

THE CAST IRON BOILER PIPES, estimated at 3,000 lbs. were cut with the old trusty Sawzall with carbide blades. Moving it from the boiler room to the basement storage room required much sweat by the effort of mostly young-at-heart (dare we say) senior citizens. The next challenge was how do we move these HEAVY LARGE CAST IRON PIECES up the stairs and out of the basement?

Then 5 YOUNG, STRONG Hasting College Football players were recruited to help us as a service project. These young men moved all the cast iron from the main basement and the basement beneath the altar area in 55 minutes. They loaded all this scrap metal in to a recycling container in the parking lot to be salvaged. Thanks TO THEM.

Removal of the old cooling tower for salvage

THE TOTAL AMOUNT RECEIVED FROM RECYCLING THE METAL HARVESTED DURING OUR PROJECTS WAS \$7,978.20.

Concrete fill mix was used in all areas where the old heating-cooling units had been removed and installed new floor tiles and carpet. This was a major project of its own!

Replaced broken and stained ceiling tiles where needed in the throughout both buildings

Installed new 75-inch TV monitors in the East & West Fellowship Rooms

Replaced fluorescent light tubes where needed and converted many of the light fixtures to new, energy-efficient LED light fixtures

Installed NEW water supply shut-off valve's so that certain areas of the building could be shut off instead of the entire building's water supply.

Ran a new telephone line to the East Fellowship Hall kitchen

Installed a new cold-water plastic pex line from the library ceiling in the basement to the church office to replace the broken line that supplied water the bathroom; installed a 5-gallon water heater

Installed new floor covering in the narthex, church offices, sanctuary, altar area, sacristy, vestry and both bathrooms by the West Fellowship room. Added a fresh coat of paint to the walls of these bathrooms.

Installed new energy-efficient LED lighting in the sanctuary

#### BOYS AND GIRLS SCHOOL BATHROOMS

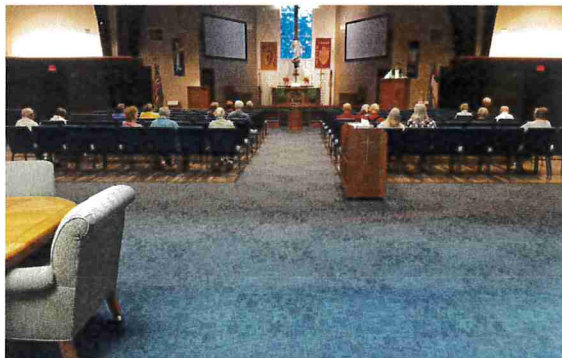
Installed new floor covering, painted the walls, converted to energy-efficient LED lighting, re-surfaced the bathroom stall dividers, installed wall-mounted toilet fixtures and modified a stall in each bathroom to be handicap accessible.

The parking lot was resurfaced with asphalt millings to make a smooth surface at a cost a fraction of the cost of concrete

Last but not least, mowing the lawn, trimming and spraying weeds to beautify our property

One more project is to be completed this month. The carpet in the East Fellowship Hall will be removed and replaced with a concrete-finish product, with a lifetime warranty.

A Big THANK YOU to all of our Volunteers!



# The Reehl Mission Vision



**Mission statement:** *"Bringing the love of Jesus to those most in need through humanitarian items and the words of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."*

November 24, 2023

Dear Friends,

Greetings in the Name of our **RISEN** Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who was, who is and who is to come, Amen.

This month we have been able to send funds to Estonia, Lithuania, the Baltic States as well as Finland for the numerous facilities in Russia.

Along with these funds, special needs funds for: Bibles, Warm Boots and Salaries for our coworkers. Funds have been sent to each of the above countries on your behalf.

Our coworkers Nikolai and Valentina have shared many photos from the Orphanages, prisons and hospitals as well as elderly care centers that they have visited recently under your care. You can visit our Facebook page at The Reehl Mission Vision and see some of these photos. With supplies that we provide, hygiene products, vitamins and medicines that are essential for these special people. Most importantly, we are sharing through this ministry the love of Jesus Christ our Savior.

Pastor Artis Eglitis is helping us in Latvia, Renate and Valentina are helping us in Estonia, Pastor Arv is our main Mission helper in Lithuania and Tatiana is our super lady in Southern Russia.

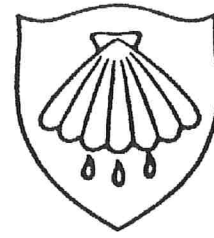
Our name now is The Reehl Mission Vision. We are the **REEHL** deal. You can count on us to bring Jesus to these people in need.

On behalf of our entire Board of Directors: **Co-Chairmen** – Pastor Benson and Karen Tiedeman, **Secretary** – Suzanne Jagels, **Treasurer** – Lyle Weitzel, **Director** – Cindi Jo Trahms.

Your humble servants and friends,

Pastor Ron Benson

Karen Reehl Tiedeman

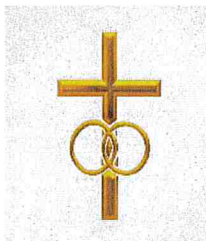


### December Birthdays

Trenton Halbmaier	Dec 1
Robert Stark (81)	Dec 1
Rose Henriksen	Dec 2
Wilson Siebert	Dec 2
Royce Holliday	Dec 3
Matthew Wallin	Dec 3
Devin Hueftle	Dec 4
Lukas Siebert	Dec 4
Debra Goodrich	Dec 6
Gayle Kranau (87)	Dec 10
Corinne Manske	Dec 10
Kay Struss	Dec 10
Keith Kopisch	Dec 12
Greg Eckhardt	Dec 13
Laura Hargis	Dec 18
Conner Kelley	Dec 21
Kieton Armstrong	Dec 25
Jerry Hull	Dec 26
Susan Nielsen	Dec 28
Aidyn Dobrovlny	Dec 30

### December Baptism Birthdays

Orva Lovejoy	Dec 1
Ed Buss	Dec 4
Linda Wills	Dec 4
Tyler Hinrichs	Dec 8
David Harlow	Dec 9
Sarah Fischer	Dec 12
Dylan Hinrichs	Dec 12
Rachel Eckhardt	Dec 14
Becky Koepke	Dec 14
Beth Koepke	Dec 14
Robert Meyer	Dec 14
Donna Peterson	Dec 16
Jarilyn Lyons	Dec 18
Trenton Halbmaier	Dec 19
Corinne Mankin	Dec 20
Devin Hueftle	Dec 21
Caden Boyer	Dec 24
Riley Roesener	Dec 25
Cameron Wright	Dec 25
Keith Kopisch	Dec 28
Mikel Philippi	Dec 30
Brian Alloway	Dec 31



### December Wedding Anniversaries

Todd and Laura Hargis	Dec 4, 1999
Greg and Rachel Eckhardt	Dec 13, 1997
Mark and Joni Philippi	Dec 20, 1985

# December 2023 Zion Lutheran Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 8:00 – 12 Noon Cookie Walk 6:00 PM Worship Service with Communion
3 9:00 AM Worship Service with Communion 10:15 AM Sunday School/Adult Bible Class 6:30 PM Abendmusik at Zion Wanda	4	5 6:00 ZCA Christmas Program	6 8:30 ZCA Chapel 9:30 AM Bible Study 12 PM Advent Service 6:00 PM Confirmation Class 5:45 PM Advent meal 7:15 Advent Service	7	8	9 9:00 AM LWML-Men's Bible Study Christmas Breakfast 6:00 PM Worship Service
10 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:15 AM Adult Bible Class	11	12 7:00 PM Board of Elders	13 8:30 ZCA Chapel 9:30 AM Bible Study 12 PM Advent Service 6:00 PM Conf. Class 7:15 Advent Service	14	15	16 6:00 PM Worship Service with Communion
17 9:00 AM Worship Service with Communion and Sunday School Presentation 10:15 AM Sunday School/Adult Bible	18	19 7:00 PM Executive Board Meeting	20 8:30 ZCA Chapel 9:30 AM Bible Study 12 PM Advent Service 6:00 PM Confirmation Class 7:15 Advent Service	21	22	23 6:00 PM Worship Service
24 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:15 AM Sunday School/Bible Class 6:00 PM Christmas Eve Service/Comm.	25 9:00 AM Christmas Day Service with Communion	26	27 9:30 AM Bible-Hymn Study	28	29	30 6:00 PM Worship Service with Communion 7:00 Pre-New Years Food, Fun and Fellowship
31 9:00 AM Worship with Communion 10:15 AM Sunday School/Adult Bible Class						