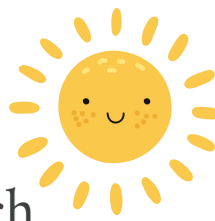




Zion Lutheran Church



# The Messenger

April 2025

## A Message from the Zion Lutheran Council President :

April. April is that month which fools us into thinking spring is here only to dump an inch or two of snow on the budding flowers and unsuspecting robins

The new church Council has met and reorganized, welcoming our new members; Molly Kuba, Amanda Kuba and Linda VanBommel. Officers for this year will be, Sue Bunkert – President, Linda VanBommel – Vice President, Ray Pittman – Treasurer, and Amanda Kuba – Secretary. Kandie Wilz remains the project person for Affordable Housing, with Tommy Meltz, Kyle Moseng and Molly Kuba continue to serve. Any questions or concerns can be directed to the Council members for attention.

Unfortunately, I must announce the resignation of Karen Farlow, our church administrator. Her last day with us will be April 8th. We certainly appreciate the time she has been with us and wish her well.

We are also approaching the holiest time of the church year as we celebrate the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We decorate our lovely sanctuary with beautiful flowers and listen to special music to uplift this timeless message. All this in the name of church and worship and they are definitely essential to sustaining our faith. But, at the moment our future faces uncertainty about our future as a church and a faith community. Therefore, I want to share with you the following letter written by Mike Dismer, retired pastor and member of Zion:

I QUIT GOING TO CHURCH

or

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO ME?

First of all, I QUIT “GOING TO CHURCH!” No, I haven’t quit attending worship, I still worship regularly on Sunday mornings. But, for starters, I am being more careful about how I use the word “church.”

A good way to begin addressing “what is most important” is to consider what the word “church” actually means. In Greek, the word for church is “ekklesia”-the called-out one. Thus, by definition, the Church is Christ’s people, the family, the intentional COMMUNITY of Jesus, those “called out” and sent into the world to share the life and Good News of Jesus.

Unfortunately, we use the word **church** to mean (1) “*the worship service*,” and we use the word **church** to (2) “*name the building*” where we gather as a community. The “church” is actually not an activity or a building. **It is the people of GOD.** We are the **church** whether or not we are attending the “activity” (worship service); we are the “church” whether we are in the church’s building or a grocery store!

There is only one reason for making this point. If we refer to the **building** as the church, we can go to the “church” and then we can *leave* “the church.” If we call worship “church,” we can “go to church” (attend a worship service) and then go to coffee when “church” is over, and then go home. In either case, we leave the building and the service behind.

When we *ARE the “church”-the people of GOD*-then we ARE the church *whatever we are doing* (worshipping or buying groceries), and we ARE the church *wherever we are* (in a sanctuary

or a doctor's office).

So, "what is most important to me?" is a question that must be answered in this context. What is most important to me is my **"being the church"** wherever I am *and* whatever I am doing! How do I do that? How do I learn to do that?

Unfortunately, it seems like "growing the church" (increasing a diminishing membership), rather than "living our faith" has been the focus for many, or more likely most, congregations for quite a few years.

Yet, history has shown us that new, more "exciting" programs, or more energetic music, or a new "strategic plan," or a more charismatic pastor, does not work to "bring in new members," or as some say, "grow the church!"

Some of this, of course, can be blamed on our individualistic culture in the U.S. today, which does not value religion.

A friend and I discussed this a few years ago in a conversation about what needs to change if congregations and Christianity (the purpose of congregations) are to survive in our culture.

**"What needs to change,"** my friend said, **"is recognizing that what is *most important* is *what happens when we leave the building.*"** Basically, she was calling us to live our faith wherever we are, with everyone we encounter. I believe we have lost track of this, as our purpose, because we don't know how to BE the church, wherever we are.

We need to focus our time, on Sunday morning and whenever else we gather, on equipping, training, and sending disciples (us) into our everyday lives to "be the church." (In the process of doing that, we need to learn to use the word "church" specifically as "the people" and not the building or its worship services.

Richard Haas, president of the Council of Foreign Relations, has written a book entitled, THE BILL OF OBLIGATIONS (the Ten Habits of Good Citizens). For many Lutherans, we define the 2 habits of "being a good Christian" as: 1) to commune once a year, and 2) to give of record once a year. Surely there is more to being a Christian, and a member of a congregation, than this!!

Sadly, where we are today is struggling to keep open our historic buildings, while maintaining enough cash to exist from month, or ear to year, with minimal staff; and, in the process, keep, what some call "the Sunday morning club," viable. We, in Christ, are so much more than a religious clab that meets each Sunday, aren't we?!

It might be good (and necessary) to have a more challenging list of obligations/disciplines/requirements for belonging to a congregation, created by and agreed to by the congregation-such as: **Corporately:**

we agree (or covenant, or promise):

- 1.To worship together *regularly*
- 2.To pray *individually and corporately*
- 3.To be involved in study that promotes Christian understanding and behavior, *regularly*
- 4.To engage in *regular service to others*, somewhere in the larger community; in congregation sponsored or in community sponsored programs
- 5.To give generously to the support of the congregation and its outreach programs.

And individually:

we agree (or covenant, or promise):

- 1.To treat **every person** we encounter as we would treat Jesus ("Whatever you do, onto the least of these, you do it onto me")
- 2.To support programs and organizations that reach beyond us (Jesus said: "feed my sheep")
- 3.To express by our everyday lives, the behaviors described as the "fruit of the Spirit:" love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control.

# LET'S QUIT GOING TO CHURCH AND more faithfully, BE THE CHURCH

Mike Dismer, Neenah, Wisconsin, March 2025

Let each of us remember the "WE" are the CHURCH beyond our brick walls and worship can happen anywhere. Pastor Jan has said that each of us may be the only "Bible" a person ever sees. Let us all carry that worship and God's message out the doors of Zion into the world around us because 'WE ARE THE CHURCH TOGETHER' wherever we happen to be.

**HAPPY EASTER! -Sue Bunkert, Zion Lutheran Council President**

## **Scripture and Prayer during time of Transition from Vicar Jake:**

Jesus said, "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light—Matthew 11:28-30

Merciful God of the present moment, God who in Jesus stills the storm and soothes the heart, bring hope and courage as we wait in uncertainty. Show us your mercy, relieve our fears and anxieties, help us to endure, and grant us patience and an expectant heart. With the assurance of your presence, may we abide in you, our God and our Savior. Amen.

## **Educational Series and Faith Formation Schedule**

**April 9th-Lent Worship Service 6:30pm; Soup Supper 5:00pm**

**April 13th - Palm Sunday** worship service 9:00am

Special event for Sunday School and Confirmation classes; Brunch

**April 17th-Maundy Thursday** worship service at 6:30pm

**April 18th-Good Friday** worship service at 6:30pm

**April 20th - Easter** worship service at 9:00am

No Sunday School or Confirmation classes

**May 18th- Confirmation Sunday**

Last Day of Sunday School



## **Thank You From Zion**

Thank you to our Thrivent Choice Donors: Ann Lynn Rehfeldt, Barbara Ann Ashman, Bonnie L Arps, Cheryl Lorraine Meyer, Cindy S Reisch, Connie C Lendved, David L Schroeder, Diana J Staedt, Edith R Stecker, Elmer W Luedtke, Gary G Lendved, Gene Wiese, Gerald L Desens, Geraldine J Ingalls, Gwendolyn H Schwandt, Harry H Hameister, James M Palm, Janice Ione Weber, Jean M Palm, Jimmie Earlin Ashman, Jon C Meyer, Kandie K Wilz, Karen L Luedtke, Marilyn J Hetzler, Robert Lee Henning, Terry L Staedt, Wendy A Sachs

Thank you to all who donated food for the blessing box. This is a vital resource for the community. Thank you to all those who assisted with fellowship, including Colleen Malchow, and Elmer and Karen Luedtke. Fellowship is an ongoing need; please volunteer if you are able.

Thank you to those who have assisted with worship services by serving as assisting ministers, musicians or ushers and those who have assisted with outreach such as our homebound visitors.

Thank you to all those who assisted with keeping the building and grounds maintained.

Thank you to our office volunteers, Lynn Walter, JoAnn Salm, Sue Joosten, Janice Staedt, Grace Van Eyck, Wendy Sachs and Pauline Meyer.

Thank you to Tom Meltz who volunteers to shop for and fill the blessing box.

**Minutes of the Council Meeting of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church**

**Monday, February 17, 2025 at 6:30**

**Present: Sue Bunkert, Ray Pittman, Tom Meltz, Kandie Wilz, Amanda Kuba, Molly Kuba, Karen Farlow, Barb Dunlap (Zion Mutual Homes liaison).**

**Excused: Linda VanBommel**

**Opening Devotion led by Ray Pittman**

**Approval of Agenda: motion made and approved**

**Approval of January Minutes: motion made and approved**



**Parish Administrator, Karen Farlow, reported that the new office printer would be installed on Tuesday, January, 18th and is under contract. The old printer (contract expired) will be retained for auxiliary use. Snow removal glitch resolved with Lecker and consideration of different provider for next year will be done. Met with representatives of Appleton Area School District to determine what will be removed from the building when they leave in August. Would like to see security cameras remain.**

**Committee Reports reviewed from:**

**Finance – There was a printing error on Page 17 of the Financial Report included in the 2024 Annual Report. Announcement will be included in the bulletin and corrected copies of the affected page will be reprinted and can be picked up from the table in the back of the church. This does not have any impact on Zion's finances.**

**Music & Worship - Planning for worship during Lent, including the Lenten Soup Suppers, is proceeding and arrangements being made for ongoing special music dates.**

**Personnel – Karen will contact Nash Baeten as far as doing the lawn care for Zion this summer. He will be employed as an independent contractor.**

**Zion Mutual Homes – Barb reported that committee election of officers completed. Also, Brian Perekovich (maintenance) and Anita Knaus (bookkeeping) will be moving in as of March 1st. Addressed how underground parking spaces are assigned. (One space for each apartment based on availability since there is not a space for each of the apartments). Also, emotional support animals must be allowed in accordance with the law.**

**Property – Motion was made and approved for Memo of Understanding to have Kandie Wilz become the point person for Zion's Affordable Housing Project as consultant Bonnie Nussbaum will take a step back to work on established contacts with developers, supporters, etc. This change will have no financial impact on the budget.**

**Consideration of the new Zion Vision Statement tabled until March meeting.**

**Reorganization of Council positions tabled until March meeting.**

**Next Meeting: Monday, March 17th, 2025 at 6:30 PM**

**Devotion to be led by Ray Pittman**

**Motion to Dismiss at 7:35 PM**

**Closed with Lord's Prayer.**



**Respectfully submitted by Sue Bunkert**

**These minutes have not been approved.**

**They will be approved at the 6:30 pm Council meeting on March 17, 2025**







# April 2025

Zion Lutheran Church

Monday, April 14, 2025	Submissions due for May's calendar
<b>Wednesday, April 2</b> <b>Tower RingerZ Rehearsal 4:15pm</b> <b>Lenten Supper 5:00 pm</b> <b>Worship Service 6:30 pm</b>	<b>Lenten Service</b> Leader: Grace Van Eyck Musician: Pam Keane Opens: Jim Schley Closes: Greg Pettigrew
<b>Sunday, April 6</b> Isa 43:16-21; Ps 126 Phil 3:4b-14; John 12:1-8 Choir Rehearsal 8-8:45 am <b>Worship Service 9:00 am</b> followed by <b>Coffee Hour</b> Sunday School & Confirmation	<b>Fifth Sunday of Lent</b> Pastor Jan LaVake Assisting Minister: Tricia Staedt Acolyte: Alexa Rusch Musician: William Surtees Opens: Jim Schley Closes: Tammy Mossholder
<b>Tuesday, April 8</b>	Zion Mutual Homes Meeting 10:00am
<b>Wednesday, April 9</b> <b>Tower RingerZ Rehearsal 4:15pm</b> <b>Lenten Supper 5:00 pm</b> <b>Worship Service 6:30 pm</b>	<b>Lenten Service</b> Leader: Tom Meltz Musician: Heather Watney Opens: Jim Schley Closes: Gwen Schwandt
<b>Sunday, April 13</b> Isa 50:4-9a; Ps 31:9-16 Phil 2:5-11; Luke 23:1-49 Choir Rehearsal 8-8:45 am <b>Worship Service 9:00 am</b> Followed by Palm Sunday Brunch	<b>Palm Sunday</b> Vicar Jake Czarnik-Neimeyer Assisting Minister: Grace Van Eyck Acolyte: Freya Budde Musician: Heather Watney Opens: Greg Pettigrew Closes: Jodi Hoesli
<b>Thursday, April 17</b> <b>Worship Service 6:30 pm</b> Exod 12:1-4 [5-10] 11-14; Ps 116:1-2, 12-19 1 Cor 11:23-26, John 13:1-17, 31b-35	<b>Maundy Thursday</b> Vicar Jake Czarnik-Neimeyer Assisting Minister: Wendy Sachs Musician: William Surtees Opens: Greg Pettigrew Closes: Jodi Hoesli
<b>Friday, April 18</b> <b>Ecumenical Worship Service 12:00 pm at:</b> <b>Worship Service 6:30 pm at:</b> Tenebrae Service	<b>Good Friday</b> <b>Unitarian Fellowship in Appleton</b> (2600 Philip Lane) <b>Zion Lutheran Church</b> -Vicar Jake Czarnik Neimeyer Assisting Minister: Tom Meltz (6:30 pm Zion service) Musician: William Surtees Opens: Greg Pettigrew Closes: Gwen Schwandt
<b>Sunday, April 20</b> Acts 10:34-43; Ps 118:1-2, 14-24 1 Cor 15:19-26; Luke 24:1-12 Choir Rehearsal 8-8:45 am <b>Worship Service 9:00 am</b>	<b>Easter Sunday</b> Vicar Jake Czarnik-Neimeyer Assisting Minister: Gwen Schwandt Acolyte: Alexa Rusch Musician: William Surtees Opens and closes: Gwen Schwandt
<b>Monday, April 21</b>	Parish Council Meeting 6:30pm
<b>Wednesday, April 23</b>	Tower RingerZ Rehearsal 4:15pm
<b>Sunday, April 27</b> Acts 5:27-32; Ps 118:14-29 Rev 1:4-8; John 20:19-31 Choir Rehearsal 8-8:45 am <b>Worship Service 9:00 am</b> followed by Coffee Hour Sunday School & Confirmation	<b>Second Sunday of Easter</b> Vicar Jake Czarnik-Neimeyer Assisting Minister: Tommy Meltz Acolyte: Lily Gruselle Musician: Heather Watney Opens: Jim Schley Closes: Tammy Mossholder
<b>Wednesday, April 30</b>	Tower RingerZ Rehearsal 4:15pm





Photos by Karen Luedtke

