

ZION'S MESSENGER

January 2021

Volume 44

Issue 1

ZION'S MISSION STATEMENT

To Proclaim the Joy of Salvation Through Word and Sacrament



Northeastern
Minnesota Synod,
ELCA

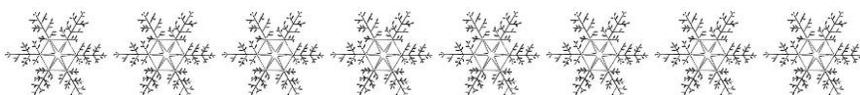
Pastor
Mark Peters

Music Director
Joe Belanger

Zion Chimes
Donna Barg

Office Hours

Monday – Thursday
9:00 am – 12:00 pm



Mark your calendars!

The annual congregational meeting
for Zion Lutheran Church will be held
Sunday, January 31, 2021
at the Backus Community Center.

More details will be announced and
published in upcoming Sunday
bulletins, announcements, and social
media.

You may also contact the church
office for more details.

218/283-9865
zionluthernintlfalls.org



Pastor Mark's Musings January 2021

Christmas has finally arrived as a hopeful beginning and prelude to a new (and better) year! Christ – Immanuel – meaning “God with us” – REALLY with us – surrounds and supports us as together we emerge with squinting eyes from this pandemic. As stated in our recent stewardship letter from the Church Council, “The pandemic is receiving a shot in the arm so it should be on its way out.” I’m sure that you are as ready as I am for turning the page. What story will we write – might we imagine and live out – as we go forward?

I write this article from my kitchen table at our family farm in South-Central Wisconsin as I gather this week to celebrate the new year with my family. There was fresh snow last night with more on the way tomorrow. Newly fallen snow is a visually reminder of a fresh start. Animal tracks meander cross trails and streams giving witness that not all is dormant under the blanket of snow. I’ve been taking time each day to pray about 2021 and the scripture verse appointed for this approaching weekend from Jeremiah 31:7-9, 13 is a touchstone verse for how I feel right now: *“For thus says the Lord: Sing aloud...”*

In this text, God is calling his people back from exile. All people: men, women, the blind, those with children; they all come back, weeping, into the loving embrace of their community. For too long they had to live with the hope for a better day, and they finally have a reason to celebrate. God has straightened the path for them and has turned their mourning into joy. As we go into the new year, I feel as though God is slowly calling us home. Like the time in exile, the last year for us has been dim and full of loss. But as we approach January 1, we must stumble bravely into a new year with the scars born of grief and stress from the past year. But as I contemplate this passage and muse about what lies ahead, the light at the end of the tunnel is no longer an oncoming train but the light of Christ breaking once again into our world. Fresh and new like the snow. What path will our feet make as we journey forward?

I am so grateful that frontline workers and those most vulnerable have begun receiving their first dose of the new vaccine. With that said, I will not pretend that everything is okay. Thousands of people continue dying daily from Covid-19 and millions are experiencing food insecurity and economic hardship. We have serious work to do to protect those most vulnerable. This is, after all, the work to which we are called and for which Christ entered the world to accomplish. Like those in exile in Jeremiah, I hope that God is slowly turning our mourning into joy. Giving gladness to sorrow. Comforting us as we weather tragedy. My hope, my prayer with which I invite you to join me in praying these days ahead, is that you also have hope that God is slowly and surely making our paths just a little bit straighter.

(continued)

One final thought. We gather virtually for worship each week and eagerly await the day that our context is safe enough for us to gather in-person. Soon we will also be able to minister more outwardly and visibly in our community and world. Our Smart Team continues to meet monthly to monitor the situation based on the best science and medical advice. Until that day arrives (and it will not happen all at once but gradually and in carefully choreographed stages), our worship team will remain small but mighty.

Please note that the context for worship is challenging at best. Our radio broadcast is one-hour in length and without congregational singing, vocal/bell choir, or congregational back-and-forth/call and response there remains the full hour to fill to the brim with music and spoken word. Our team has been engaged in “holy-experimentation” as we see how technology can augment and lend value to our efforts.

We welcome your input and thoughtful response and appreciate the many kind words in the on-line chat during the Facebook livestream. Our intent is always to honor God through our worship, music and praise even though it is necessarily different from our norm. If you wish to participate as lector, liturgist, soloist/musician, or in any other manner that serves the purpose of our worship we stand at the ready to welcome your participation.

In Christ,

Pastor Mark

Thank you!

Thank you, Len Peterson for making the Christmas luminaries that were used in our sanctuary and made available for people to enjoy at home during this Christmas season.

Thank you!

Thank you, Mike Romslo and Lucille Qualley for making lefse as a fundraiser for youth and camperships. Over \$900 was raised!

Thank you!

Thank you, Jaci Nagle and Mike Romslo for organizing and making the Yule Log kits. Many were created, assembled, and enjoyed for this holiday season.

Article published in The Daily Journal December 2, 2020

Pastor Mark Peters makes Zion Lutheran Church his home congregation

On Sunday, December 6, at its 9:30 a.m. service, Zion Lutheran church installed its new Pastor, Mark Peters. Pastor Peters comes to Zion following a two-year search. The church was looking for a pastor who not only had the skills of preaching and worship leadership, pastoral care and visitation, but also had a good sense of stewardship and community. The congregation found all of that, and more, in Pastor Peters.

Pastor Peters comes to Zion after a three-year term as pastor at French River Lutheran Church, Duluth. He wanted to settle into the life of a congregation and he accepted the call to Zion. His strength in building, a sense of community and stewardship will serve our congregation, as well as the community. The outreach programs at Zion include supporting the Falls Hunger Coalition, Ruby's Pantry, and the Backus Community Cafe through volunteer and financial assistance. Zion's collaborative ecumenical efforts with other congregations also drew him to Zion. Those efforts include midweek Advent and Lenten and Summer in the Park services. Zion and Littlefork Lutheran also maintain a cabin at Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry Camp at Lake Vermilion. Pastor Peters was impressed Zion also had a strong outreach ministry through live radio, live streaming and video replay, and local television. With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, Zion was poised to meet the spiritual needs of the congregation and the area. The live virtual Facebook service has steadily increased viewership, now averaging over 400 views per week. Viewers are from the United States, Canada, Europe, and Africa.

Pastor Peters grew up in Madison, Wisconsin, and attended the University of Wisconsin, studying political science and education. After college, he attended Luther Seminary in St. Paul, was ordained, then served his first call was in rural southwestern Minnesota near Wilmar. He served the next 18 years as executive director of Lutheran Advocacy Minnesota, whose purpose statement reads: "addresses biblical values such as concern for people living in poverty and struggling with hunger and disease, hospitality to strangers, and care for creation." He advocated for the public policy goals of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). "I related to government officials in Minnesota from Jesse Ventura to Tim Pawlenty to Mark Dayton," he says and then added that there were also changes in bishops. "A lot stays the same, but a lot changes. What I found is, in order to navigate in that area, to be authentic, one really needs to focus on the common good, not the partisan ideologies, especially when representing the church." 2020 marks his 28th year in ministry.

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Peters said “I consider myself an adaptive leader. Our denomination is rooted historically in the Reformation and always needs to be ceaselessly reforming and renewing in order to stay relevant to the current context. The church is the Church of the Reformation, but it always needs to be ceaselessly reforming and being made new.” He was keen on finding a church with an outward community focus and wanted a church that cared for the natural beauty of the world in which we live. Pastor Peters describes himself as a servant/leader and sees ministry as a quest to discover and nurture the abundant gifts already present in congregations and communities, and he believes that congregations are called upon to connect with local and global communities. He brings together those with similar interests and encourages them to utilize those talents and become a more active part of the community and greater area.

Pastor Peters’ history includes an active involvement in youth ministry and in researching and implementing education programs for all ages, often in partnership with other congregations. A recent server/leader position he held was as Executive Director of the Luther Point Bible Camp and Retreat Center in Grantsburg, Wisconsin.

Regarding day in the life of Pastor Peters, he states: “If there’s a day or any recurring time that I don’t want to get up and come into the office or go out into the community, then it’s time to do something else. When I wake up in the morning, I am eager to see what surprises await; and I am never disappointed or bored. It’s about relationships and it’s about being buoyed by those who really seek to make a difference.”

Pastor Peters was married 33 years to his wife, Janeen, a graduate of Luther Seminary, who died in 2018. He has two sons who live with him in the home he recently purchased near the airport. He enjoys living close enough to his home that he can go there for lunch and have his English Shepherd dog “take him for a walk”. His oldest son, Noah, is 20 years old and currently taking a year off from college, wanting to live the full experience of college life upon returning to our new norm. Alek is 16 and is attending Littlefork-Big Falls High School.

Pastor Peters is passionate about singing, having sung professionally or semi-professionally throughout his life. He has 48 boxes of vinyl records and many CD’s and enjoys most every type of music. He looks forward to sharing his love of music with the congregation. “Music is a big part of who I am, I love being in a vocation that values that.” Zion fully meets that desire.

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Peters actively manages the Wisconsin family farm with his brother. The farm is enrolled in various forestry and conservation programs. Their management practices have been awarded the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Award by the Richland County Wisconsin Conservation Committee. Peters' favorite season is winter and he loves cross country skiing and finds I Falls ripe for exploring area trails. Upland game and turkey hunting, archery, and fishing (mostly from a canoe) are some of his other interests.

As to Pastor Mark, Bishop Amy Odgren states: "Pastor Mark is a compassionate and experienced pastor who brings the gifts of solid teaching and preaching, the love of music, relevant advocacy, and support of outdoor ministry to his new role as pastor of Zion Lutheran Church. He will give leadership and encouragement to Zion to be a church actively engaged with the community while sharing the love of Christ with others".

HOLY COMMUNION

Beginning Sunday, November 29, Holy Communion will be available for you. Our Smart Team has approved a plan that, following the Sunday morning virtual Worship service, the church will be open until noon for people to come in and receive communion. Masks and physical distancing will be required inside the building. Signs and directions will also be posted. We will be using a prefilled kit that includes a wafer and grape juice.

These kits will also be available during our weekday office hours if you would like to pick them up ahead of time and participate in the sacrament from home while the service is being broadcast. Call the church with any questions.



ZLCW NEWS AND NOTES



January 2021

For the first four months of the New Year, we will be going on an adventure of noticing and learning from God's heavenly messengers. Our monthly Bible studies are entitled "Journeys with Angels". Session one is "Looking Up" with our focus verse, Job 38:4a, 7. Please note: For our first meeting, we ask members to bring with you some pictures of angels from advertisements or Christmas publications. We will be meeting on Monday, January 4 at 1:30 pm. Our hostess will be Donna Barg. Masks required. Everyone encouraged to read the study.

ZLCW NEWS AND NOTES

January 2021

(Continued)

Piecemaker Gatherings

We will be getting back to our stewardship projects on Monday and Tuesday, January 11, 12 & 18,19. There are many tasks to complete, so many hands are needed. Remember to bring a bag lunch for noon. FYI: Four of our quilts were sold in December, which leaves us with two quilts for purchase. Some craft items, cards, and napkins are available, also.

Recipe Corner

Finger Lickin' Good Spare Ribs

4# country style spare ribs. Boil in water with salt added for 1 hour or until nearly done. Drain ribs and place them in a 9X13 pan.

Simmer sauce ingredients on stove for 20-30 minutes.

1 med. Diced onion
½ c. corn syrup
¼ c. brown sugar
1 T. worchestershire sauce
½ tsp liquid smoke (optional)
1 c. ketchup
¼ tsp chili powder
1 tsp mustard
¼ c. vinegar

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Baste ribs with sauce and bake about 1 hour (Note: sauce may be used with chicken also.)

Chuckles

Wife to husband: Help me carry out the garbage.

He: Is it that heavy?

She: No, but I want the neighbors to see us go out together once in a while!

Head Waiter: Snails are our specialty.

Guest: I know. I was waited on by one last time!

Food for Thought... Two things are hard on the heart: running uphill and running down people.

Until next month, Happy New Year!

Donna

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

COUNCIL MINUTES – October 20, 2020 – 6:02 PM

Roll Call

Present:		Absent:
D Anderson	B Peterson	E Korpi
J Cann	S Schneider	J Wilson
B Cole	C Schumacher	
G Costley	J Stavseth	
Pastor M Peters	H Wilson (by phone)	

- I **Devotions** - Pastor Peters - proposal – likes to share by having a council member open the meeting with devotions or a prayer. From Melkine *-Holding your Family Together*, five steps: acknowledge your highs and lows, read a scripture verse pertaining to your highs and lows, talk and share with others how the verse related, pray for others, bless one another
- II **Secretary's Report** (Sept. 2) – Written – Elsie Korpi, Recording Secretary - Motion to accept by Carol Schumacher, second by Belmer Cole, Motion carried
- III **Treasurer's Report** – Written - Motion to accept by Jim Stavseth, second by Carol Schumacher, Motion carried.
- IV **President's Report** – Bob Peterson
Need to redefine positions of Secretary and Music Director
- V **Pastor's Report** – Mark Peters
- Getting settled in, purchased a house, visiting local businesses to get to know the community, visiting with Zion members as they visit the church
 - Zion uses the Shepherd's Staff Database and will learn how the database works compared with others he has worked with in the past
 - Would like committees to meet and plan a 2021 agenda with Worship and Music working with Smart Team to make plans for serving communion on a weekly basis – starting with Advent
 - Installation is set for December 6, at which time recognition and thanksgiving for all Joe has done during his tenure as SAM and during the transition to a new Pastor
 - Bishop Amy Odgren would like to meet with Council and Churches
 - Performance Reviews – Joelle and Joe – in preparation of annual meeting and 2021 budget

- Education Committee – involve all ages, parents and youth, an inter-generational approach
- Start a midweek text study
- Would like feedback regarding worship services – preaching teaching, service components

VI **Ongoing Business**

- Treasurer Position: Motion to appoint Doug Anderson by John Cann, second by Carol Schumacher, Motion carried
- Smart Team – Pastor Peters has joined the team and now serves with Charles Helleloid Kris Foss, Dick Peterson, and Joe Belanger; communion may be handled by ‘disposable’ honor system

VII **Committee Reports** – Bob Peterson – time to reorganize and reinvigorate committee

Education:

- Hunter Wilson – Education Committee
- Doug Cann – Evangelism Committee

Property/Grounds

- Air conditioning/compressor – two bids received on air conditioning; however, issues with air compressor – Motion authorizing Executive Committee to make decision following recommendations of Committee by Jim Stavseth, second by John Cann, Motion carried
- Pastor’s Office – Pastor Peters - working on flooring and painting office, desk arrived, computer still in repair

VIII **New business**

Video Camera

Current camera is in-place camera, need zoom-capable camera to focus in on altar and other sanctuary spots – new camera at a cost of \$2,100 with installation of \$400. There are sufficient funds in Technology Fund. Motion by Hunter Wilson to proceed with funds from Technology not to exceed \$2,500, second by Gail Costley, Motion carried

Council Meetings

3rd Monday of each month with exception of November – November 24

There being no further business, upon motion by Jim Stavseth, second by Carol Schumacher, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail L Costley, Secretary

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
COUNCIL MINUTES
November 24, 2020, 6:21 PM

Roll Call

Present: J Cann, G Costley, E Korpi, Pastor M Peters, B Peterson, S Schneider, C Schumacher, J Stavseth, H Wilson, J Wilson

Absent: D Anderson, B Cole, S Kelly

1 **Devotions** - Gail Costley - Be thankful, creative, innovative, confident; think differently and positively, face your past without regret. Be thankful.

2 **Secretary's Report** (Oct . 20) – Written – Gail Costley
One correction. Doug Anderson, Evangelism Committee rather than Doug Cann. Motion to accept by Shari Schneider, second by Carol Schumacher. Motion carried

3 **Treasurer's Report** – Written, Bob Peterson
Motion to accept by Gail Costley, second by Hunter Wilson. Motion carried.

4 **President's Report** – Bob Peterson
Secretary Joelle Leseman, resigned effective November 2, citing conflict with staff and Executive Committee. She declined an exit interview.

5 **Pastor's Report** – Mark Peters

- a The new computer is in and being installed
- b Worship Committee
 - i communion will be every week starting the first Sunday in Advent, disposable pre-filled bread/wine servings will be distributed during the week and will be served following the Sunday service following Smart Committee policy. Information will be in the next newsletter
 - ii Blue Christmas/Longest Night Worship - a service on December 21 for those struggling with darkness and grief, those living with loss
 - iii Yule log children kits available for pick up and assembly at home
- c Ecumenical Thanksgiving Day service with prayer and music
- d Ecumenical Wednesday Advent Services with Zion, First Lutheran, Holy Trinity, Faith United, and Littlefork Lutheran, the first being held at Zion, December 2, 7:00 p.m.
- e Education Committee
 - i Meeting with Parents for planning purposes, when, where, types, camps, outdoor settings, etc.
 - ii Vacation Bible School - an ecumenical partnership
- f Pay Periods - change from bi-weekly to twice a month, to be worked out with Randy Pozniak's office
- g Zoom account, the cost is \$150.00 per year, no objections
- h Switch Shepherd's Staff (current, outdated church office and accounting program) to Church 360 (an up-to-date, cloud based program). Both are by Concordia Solutions; however, 360 contains a ledger and the financial part works much better, annual cost \$500 per year. There will be a one-time start up fee, we will be given credit for the unused 2020 Shepherd's Staff program, and

training videos are always available for reference. Motion to purchase by Bob Peterson, second by Gail Costley, motion carried

- i Took a vacation day last Sunday
- j Will be vacationing at the Peters Farm the week of December 27 through New Year's - planning on a prerecorded worship service.

6 **Committee Reports**

a Education - See Pastor Mark's report - looking at an adult education bible study - using Zoom for the short term

b Evangelism - Elsie Korpi - Pat Smythe is working on getting the committee together

c Property and Grounds

i Bob Peterson - per Shawn Kelly air conditioning on hold as problems with air compressor and boilers. Dean at Shannon's has not been able to get an estimate to us quickly - Pastor Mark to get committee together as soon as possible

ii Pastor Mark - update on new flooring to replace hazardous carpeting in his office - Total Replacement Cost (including \$100 tear out cost) \$1,849.88. Motion - Committee recommendation by Shawn, second by John Cann, motion carried.

d Stewardship – Pastor Peters -

i fund raising goals - currently temple talks, newsletter, mailings - evaluate present program

ii Web page - Ted Saxton has been donating his time to make improvements

e Worship and Music – See Pastor Peters' report and per Carol Schumacher

i luminary kits available for pickup, gets the families involved, the luminaries to be put together and brought back to the church on Christmas Eve to line the sidewalk

ii Greens, garland, will be up before December 6 - decorators: Joe Belanger, Carol Schumacher, Donna Barg, Shari Schneider, Guy Johnson, Mike Romslo, Lynn Belanger

7 **New business**

a Job Descriptions - Joe has and is filling in to take care of some of Joelle's duties. The Executive Committee met with Joe on duties and compensation but no agreement was reached. After discussion, Carol Schumacher made a Motion to pay Joe an additional eight hours per week at his S.A.M. rate retroactive to October 2 through the end of the year (12/31), seconded by Elsie Korpi. Roll Call Vote: Yes - B Peterson, J Stavseth, Pastor Peters, H Wilson, C Schumacher, S Schneider, G Costley, E Korpi, J Wilson; No - J Cann - Yes-9 No-1, Motion carried.

b Smart Committee - stay the course, live streaming, disposable communion

c Installation December 6 - planners: Bob and Pam Peterson, Carol Schumacher, limit attendance, no singing, masked

There being no further business, upon motion by Elsie Korpi, second by Carol Schumacher, meeting adjourned.

Closing Prayer by Pastor Mark

Respectfully submitted,
Gail L Costley, Secretary

Zion Lutheran Church
530 Sixth Street
International Falls, MN 56649

Return Service Requested

US Postage PAID Permit #49 International Falls
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January 2021 NEWSLETTER – VOLUME 44, ISSUE 1

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to our Sunday radio broadcast on K104.1 FM at 9:30 am,
we also live-stream the service on our Facebook page.

Please join us!

HELP US MAINTAIN OUR MAILING LIST

Please let us know if you have an address change – temporary or permanent.

Zion Lutheran Church
530 Sixth Street
International Falls, MN 56649

218/283-9865

Email: zionlutheranifalls@gmail.com

Website: www.zionluthernintlfalls.org