***The Messenger***

***A newsletter of Zion Lutheran Church ~ Ottawa Lake, MI***

***January 2023***

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**FAREWELL TO PASTOR GESKE AND JACOB**

On January 1, 2023, we will have a meal following the worship service. This meal is in honor of the years of service Pastor Geske has given to Zion. Please plan to attend!

**Installation of Officers**

On January 1, 2023, we will install our congregational officers during our worship service. We thank those who are willing to serve and those that will be finishing serving for now. ~ Thank You!

 ***Zion Lutheran Church Council***

We will have our monthly Church Council Meeting after church on January 15, 2023.

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***WORSHIP WITH US EACH WEEK!***

***Join us for worship on Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m.***

***Our Saturday Contemporary Service will resume on March 11, 2023***

**Zion Church Choir**

If you love singing, please join our church choir. They meet after church in the choir room. For more information, please speak with Joseph Extejt.

***Our handbell choir will take a break and begin practicing again in March. They will begin preparing for Easter.***

 ***They would love to have you join them.***

****OFFERING ENVELOPES FOR 2023**

Offering Envelopes are available for 2023. If you did not receive a box of envelopes for the New Year and want credit for your offerings for tax purposes in 2023, please contact Sandy Brady.

**ZION Lutheran Church**

**LCMC ~ Lutheran congregations in mission for Christ**

8307 Memorial Hwy. Ottawa Lake, MI 49267 ·

(734) 856-2921

**Pastor ∙ Vacant**

[**www.zionlutheranottawalakemi.com**](http://www.zionlutheranottawalakemi.com)

**Secretary ~ Sandy brady**

**(419) 410-9380**

**skwiles\_2000@yahoo.com**

**custodian and organist~ Joseph extejt**

**For Your Information**

The following members give of their time to the leadership of this congregation. Please keep them in your prayers. If you have any questions, comments, or offers of help, please contact them.

**Chairman:** Ron Vincent

**Secretary:** MaryJo Gilliland

**Treasurer:** Brian Gilliland

**Financial Secretary:** Sandy Bondy

**Recording Secretary:** MaryJo Price

**Elders:** Ron Clark and Lee Edignton

**Deacons:** Dwight Gilliland, Jim Hredzak, and Roger Smith

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**LCMC ~ WHO WE ARE**

**Free in Christ + Accountable to One Another + Rooted in Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions + Committed to the Great Commission**

**Prayers Are Important**

If you have an occasion to request a prayer, please call the church office. If you would like your request to be on our prayer chain, please call Sandy Brady (419) 410-9380.

**Please Inform the Church Office. . .**

\*when a member of your family is ill or hospitalized or if they are discharged or moved to another facility.

\*when your address changes.

\*when a new baby arrives.

******\*when a family member marries or leaves home for college, or military.

\*when planning a wedding to be conducted at Zion.

\*when a new family moves into your neighborhood.

\*when you are planning to be out of town.

\*when a brother or sister in Christ needs a visit from Pastor.

We would like to thank all of you for kindness and love that we received this Christmas. Your love and support are greatly appreciated! May God bless you!

Love in Christ,
Pastor Geske, Sandy Brady, and Joseph Extejt

***From the desk of Pastor Geske….***

 ***What Does the Future Hold?***

Greetings to you in the name of Christ! Perhaps a good question today is, “What does the future hold?” We may not know what the future holds, but we do know who holds the future. Our awesome God who has been with us in our ministry together, will be with you as you face the future. As God has led me to conclude my time with you, I commend you to His continued care and blessing. I look forward to serving our awesome God as Jacob and I will move to Texas so that I can serve God and His people in Thrall, TX. I will conclude my time with you on January 1, 2023.

As I look back on the years with you, I am thankful for the ministry that has happened and how we have engaged our community and area with the Good News of Jesus! I rejoice and praise God for how He blessed through the time of Covid. As I leave, I pray that you will continue to move forward by faith and share the Good News of Jesus and His love. Remember that whatever the future holds, God will take care of you. Jesus told His disciples and He tells us, “Lo, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20) As long as there is a Zion Lutheran Church in Ottawa Lake, MI, there will be a need for the ministry of proclaiming God is with Us and that Jesus is the only way of forgiveness, hope, and eternal life. Please remember always to live the Gospel in your everyday lives and encourage people to come and worship and grow with you here at Zion. The most effective way of evangelism is God’s people inviting people to worship and to know our Savior Jesus.

I look back on our time and I am thankful for the activities, projects, opportunities to serve and to be the body of Christ. I rejoice in all that has been accomplished. The future is before you to continue to serve our awesome God as you share His love and seek to know Him and to make Him know.

As I reflect, I believe that God brought me here for a time and purpose. I believe that He brought us together because I was what you needed and please know that you were what I needed as well. I marvel at how God led us to be together in the partnership of the Gospel for these years. I am amazed at how God has blessed us both during this time. Watching what God has done, gives me encouragement as to what great things God has instore for Zion Lutheran Church. As we have seen, God provided. As you pray about the future, don’t limit your prayers, because God is a God of the impossible. I recall the words of Jesus, when He said, “With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.” (Mark 10:27)

What will the future hold? It is intriguing question. Thanks be to God, He holds the future. I love the song, “Because He Lives.” The beautiful words of that hymn are such a comfort as we face the unknown. “Because He lives, I can face tomorrow, Because He lives, all fear is gone; Because I know He holds the future, And life is worth the living Just because He lives!”

I would like to say, thank you to you, the family of Zion, for the many ways that you have enriched and blessed my life and Jacob’s. May God richly bless you and may you always know that the best is yet to come. Christ is coming, until then, serve and share the love and forgiveness of Jesus.

In Christ

Pastor Jeffrey D. Geske

**Newsletter Article – January 2023**

*(--From the LCMS website)*

**Your Past Does Not Define Your Future**

New Year’s is a celebration of the past and the future. We take stock of the past with thanksgiving and sometimes even relief (that it’s over), and we look to the future in hope and anticipation, and perhaps with some worry, for what it holds.

The point is that New Year’s celebrations remind us of who we are as opposed to who we would like to be, what we have done in comparison to what we want to do. It reminds us of our accomplishments, but mostly it reminds us of our failures. What we’ve lost. Who we’ve lost.

New Year’s is our own version of Charles Dickens’ classic, *A Christmas Carol*. And we all play Scrooge. We are visited by the ghosts of our pasts, presents and futures.

St. Paul writes: “The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written, ‘He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.’ He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for all your generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God” (2 Cor. 9:6–15).

St. Paul tells us that the Lord will both supply and increase what we need to give to the church for its work in the world. He tells us that this work God does in us will enrich and bless us in every way, and through this, will produce thanksgiving to God. With this in mind, here is some practical advice to help you take stock of your giving in years past and change what needs to be adjusted, improved, or done away with altogether.

First, attend the Divine Service to receive God’s gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation. If you’ve not been faithful in attending worship to hear the preaching of God’s Word, to receive forgiveness and feast on the rich food of our Lord’s body and blood for the eternal benefit of your body and soul, then repent and come to receive the gifts God freely gives. God doesn’t want your money. He wants you — all of you (Matt. 22:20–22).

Second, pray for the Lord’s help. Your right as a Christian is to speak with your Father, the King of all creation, freely through His Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. Go to the throne of grace and ask for strength and wisdom to follow His bidding faithfully (John 15:1–16).

Third, consider what the church is and what the church does. The church is a place of mercy. It inhales the mercy of the Father by the death, resurrection and ascension of His Son through the preaching of the Gospel and the Sacraments. It exhales this mercy in love toward neighbors. You are a member of the church, of God’s family. Thus, you are not only a recipient of God’s mercy, but a bearer of that mercy for the life of the world. You spread that mercy through the generous giving of your income to support the work of the church in the world, as the Israelites did in the Old Testament (Lev. 27:1–34).

Fourth, take stock of your current giving in light of the New Testament’s teaching on supporting the work of the church. Are you giving of your first fruits, taking it out of your paycheck first, or does God get what’s left over? Are you giving voluntarily and cheerfully? Are you giving proportionally and generously? The Old Testament required a tithe, or ten percent. The New Testament gives freedom to be generous, to give more for the Church’s work. Are you relying on God’s promise to provide and increase what you need to do His work? If your answer is no to any of these, repent. If God gave you His only Son, will He not provide for you all things, even physical things? Trust Him, His Word, and heed it.

So, don’t let your past define your future. Rather, commit for the year a generous proportion of your income, which is God’s gift to you for this body and life.

**WE BELIEVE, TEACH, AND CONFESS**

***From Luther’s Small Catechism***

**The Office of the Keys**

*What is the Office of the Keys?*

The Office of the Keys is that special authority which Christ has given to His church on earth to forgive the sins of repentant sinners, but to withhold forgiveness from the unrepentant as long as they do not repent.

*Where is this written?*

This is what St. John the Evangelist writes in chapter twenty: The Lord Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.” **[John 20:22–23]**

*What do you believe according to these words?*

I believe that when the called ministers of Christ deal with us by His divine command, in particular when they exclude openly unrepentant sinners from the Christian congregation and absolve those who repent of their sins and want to do better, this is just as valid and certain, even in heaven, as if Christ our dear Lord dealt with us Himself.

***BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES***

We would like to wish Happy Birthday and Happy Anniversary to the following individuals who are celebrating this month. If you are not listed or you know someone not listed, please contact Sandy Brady.

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**Flowers on the Altar** ~ If you would like to place flowers, please sign up in the hallway by the restroom.

The cost is $25.00

Please consider signing up for some time this coming year.

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***January Birthdays***

*******5 Rabecca Castell*

*7 Ron Vincent*

*14 Dorothy Gaynier*

*14 Judy Nieman*

*21 John Rittner*

*22 Carmen Nesbit*

*28 Dick Vollmer*

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***January Anniversaries***

1. *Charlie and Kay Stewart*

*9 John and Rabecca Castell*

*21 Jon and Mary Dellabona*

*28 Melvin and Connie Sieler*

****Food Bank~ Thank you for your generous help** with our Food Bank. If you have any question or would like to help in any way, please contact Rick Keck at (734) 854-4710. The Food Bank serves families and individuals on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month from 10:00 a.m. until noon.

**Our Church Directory is Online!**

View our church directory online or via the FREE mobile app today. To view the directory online, go to **members.InstantChurchDirectory.com** and follow the prompts under “Sign In” to “Create a login now.” Please remember, you must confirm your email address before you can sign in.  You will need to use your email address as listed in our directory to create a log-in the first time you use the directory online and via the mobile app.

Need help or have questions? Please contact Sandy Brady.

**Community Rewards Program**

Do you shop at Kroger? If you do, you can sign up for their Community Rewards Program and Kroger will give back to Zion money every quarter. Go on Kroger's website and sign up under Community Rewards. *(Our code is NC512)*

**Steps for Linking your Kroger card to help our ministry ~**

**1. Sign into your account at** [**www.kroger.com**](http://www.kroger.com) **or create an account.**

**2. Click on the NAME.**

**3. Scroll down to MY ACCOUNT and Click on it,**

**4. Scroll down to COMMUNITY REWARDS. Click on COMMUNITY REWARDS.**

**5. Enter Zion Lutheran Church Ottawa Lake MI (NC512)**

**THANK YOU, MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF ZION**

\*Thank you to all who decorated the church for Advent and Christmas

\*Thank you to those who provided special music for Advent and Christmas.

\*Thank you to all of you for attending the celebration of our Lord’s birth and for sharing with everyone that Jesus is the Savior of the world.

\*Thank you to everyone for making the celebration of our Lord’s birth so special.

*****Bringing Christ to the Nations and* the Nations to the Church**

"The Lutheran Hour," which began in 1930, is now heard on more than 1,300 radio stations around the world. "The Lutheran Hour," hosted by Dr. Rev. Michael Zeigler, is the world's oldest continually-broadcast Gospel radio program. This weekly half-hour program proclaims the message of Jesus Christ to all people and serves as a bridge, linking them to the Church. Listen to the Lutheran Hour on Sundays at 10:00 a.m. or at AM 1560 WWYC or anytime at [www.lhm.org](http://www.lhm.org)

**JANUARY 2023**

January 1
**"Out of Egypt"**
Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. Anthony (Tony) Cook
"Out of Egypt I called my son." With these words the Gospel of Matthew reveals the rich and interconnected history of the young nation, Israel, and the young Savior, Jesus. Follow them on their journeys to discover the true Israel and what He means to your life today.
(Matthew 2:13-23)

January 8
**"Gifted"**
Lutheran Hour Speaker: [Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler](https://www.lhm.org/about/zeigler-bio.asp)
What if we learned to see this world and everyone in it as gifts from God?
(Colossians 1:16)

January 15
**"Gifts to Share"**
Lutheran Hour Speaker: [Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler](https://www.lhm.org/about/zeigler-bio.asp)
A body of water becomes stagnant when there is no outflow. The same could be said of us.
(Colossians 1:29)

January 22
**"Whatever You Do"**
Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. Jason Broge
(Colossians 3:17-21)

January 29
**"Hopelessly Hopeful"**
Lutheran Hour Speaker: [Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler](https://www.lhm.org/about/zeigler-bio.asp)
(Colossians 1:27)

**CONGREGATIONAL MEETING DECEMBER 11 , 2022**

Meeting was called to order by Ron Vincent @10:58  and Pastor Jeff open with a prayer.

Motion made by Al Alheman and 2nd by Ron Clark to dispensed with reading of June’s minutes.  Motion made by Sheila Vincent  and 2nd by Al Alheman to approve June’s minutes.  Both motions Carried

**Pastor Report:**  Pastor first thanked Zion for  three years that he got to be at Zion.  He activities the last six months included: Bible Study Workshop and Contemporary Worship, WEbsite and Facebook and LCMC District Pericope study.  Upcoming activities: Advent Services, December 24th, Christmas Eve services at 4:00 and 6:30 and December 25th at 10:00.  Installation of Council will be January 1, 2023.

**President:**  Ron Vincent gave an update on the call committee process as of date and the requirements to look for an interim pastor until Zion can be interview and call a new pastor.  We have all kinds of information available through LCMC.  Ron also called upon every member to support call committee during this transaction and support Zion.

**Treasurer, Financial and Recording Secretary Reports:**  Brian gave report on the process of counting and depositing funds each Sunday and how the system now automatically post deposit to correct accounts .  The budget for Fiscal Year 2023 was presented to congregation for discussion and questions.  Two subjects were brought up:  Copier and trash service:  Mary Jo Gilliland said her company is getting rid of 22 copiers because of down sizing, nothing wrong with copiers, and she is going to check into purchasing one for Zion with a repair contract. Brian is going to look into Stevens rates on a smaller compactor to see if its financial beneficial to change containers.

**Elders:**  Ron Clark gave a report on the new water heater that was installed and updates to property for last six months.  Dwight and Mary Jo Gilliland will have the carpet by the ramp replaced at their expense.  Thank You!

**Deacon:**  Dwight Gilliland said they are still in need of another deacon.  Roger Smith said he would it during the spring, summer and fall months. Motion made by Sandy Brady and 2nd by Sandy Bondy to accept Roger as Deacon.  Carried A contractor, John Kastel, has been contracted to do snow removal this year.  John does this at no charge to Zion but we give him $100 gift card each month.

**Secretary/Trust Fund Report:** The dinners were well received and attended.  Connie Sieler reported that the Trust Fund CD’s are all due in 2023 and this time they will be rolled over except for the PNC one for approximately $6000. This will be cashed out and reinvested.

**Food Bank:**  Rick Keck gave a report on the work of the pantry.  They have 25 seniors, 24 adults and 14 children receiving benefits now.  Rick purchased turkeys and hams for Thanksgiving.

Motion made by Connie Sieler to accept all above reports and 2nd by John Rittner.  Carried

**Old Business:**  Zion needs volunteers to due the Audit for years 2021 and 2022.  Please see a council member if you can do this.  A discussion was held on security at church and congregation agreed present precautions were working.

**New Business:**

1.    Questionnaire was pasted out to congregation to put down their opinions and what call committee needs to look for in a Pastor.  Please fill out and return to Sheila Vincent.

2.    Ron gave a brief talk on the Outlook for Zion church.

3.    Council openings, Secretary and Recording Secretary.  Mary Jo Price said she would continue to be Recording Secretary.  Motion made by Sheila Vincent and 2nd by Al Alheman to accept Mary Jo as Recording Secretary.  Carried  Mary Jo Gilliland volunteered to be Secretary and motion made by Al Alheman and seconded by Carol Alexander to accept Mary Jo Gilliland as Secretary.  Carried

4.    Replacements are needed for church dinners and events, can be more than one person or committee.  See a council member if interested.

5.    There is an opening on Call Committee if interested.  Please see Sheila Vincent or Connie Siler.

Motion made by  Connie Sieler  to adjourn and 2nd by Sandy Brady .  Carried

Adjourned at 12:22.

Adjourned with Lord’s Prayer

Respectfully Submitted

Connie Sieler, Secretary