

Zion Lutheran Church Newsletter

*“Those who trust in the Lord shall be like Mount Zion,
which cannot be moved, but abides forever.” (Psalm 125:1)*

January 2019

Pastoral Letter	page 3
In the Liturgy	page 4
From the Associate Pastor	page 5
Bible Study & Learning Opportunities, Children’s & Youth Education.....	page 6
From the Vicar	page 7
Mission and Outreach, 2019 Annual Meeting, Thank You.....	page 8
“Notes” from the Kantor.....	page 9
Memorials and Other Gifts Received	Page 10
News and Events.....	page 11

Epiphany Sermon Series
Outreach: Sharing the Gifts
Saturdays/Sundays + January 2019

January 6: Epiphany
The Father's Eternal Purpose

January 13: Baptism of Our Lord
Sharing the Son

January 20
Sharing the Spirit

January 27
The Gifts Rejected: "No!"

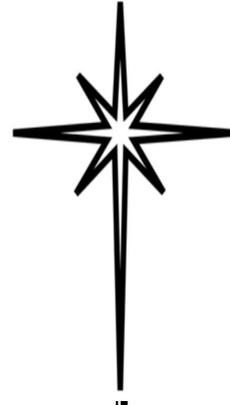
February 3
The Gifts Opposed: Evil

February 10
The Gifts Still Given: Ministry

February 17
Sharing the Absolution, Part I

February 24
Sharing the Absolution, Part II

March 3: Transfiguration
The Eighth Day of the Week



Pastoral Letter

“You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” (1 Peter 2:9)

Dear Zion,

The bright star that led the Magi (wise men) to our Lord Jesus had a point: to preach the birth of a newborn King.

Our Lord’s baptism in the Jordan River had a similar point: to preach that this Newborn is in fact the Eternal God, the Father’s beloved Son.

Now baptized into His Name, you are the light. Like the star, you have been sent with Jesus into the darkness of this world to preach the gospel: *The King has come! He humbled Himself to die for you! He rules the world with truth and grace!*

Sharing that word is the Church’s *outreach*.

People sometimes identify outreach with doing deeds of mercy or charity. Such mercy is good, and our Lord commands that we do it. But it is different from outreach.

God reached to us in Christ so that He might *save the world by faith in Him*. Since “faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17), the main outreach of the Church is to share that word.

The word of Christ gives the gifts of Christ: forgiveness, life, salvation, fellowship with God, friendship with the Savior, life in the Church, prayer, praise, Holy Supper—on and on it goes.

This January and February, during the season of Epiphany, we will preach on ***Outreach: Sharing the Gifts*** (a schedule appears next to this article). Outreach and Epiphany go hand-in-hand! Epiphany’s all about the star and the baptism of Christ, and now that you are baptized, “you shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:15).

Peace!

Pastor Gjerde

In the Liturgy

Scripture Readings in Worship this January

Below are the Bible readings that you will hear at weekend worship during January. Read them before worship, and then return to them throughout the following week.

Sunday, January 6: Isaiah 60:1-6, Ephesians 3:1-12, Matthew 2:1-12

Sunday, January 13: Isaiah 43:1-7, Romans 6:1-11, Luke 3:15-22

Sunday, January 20: Isaiah 62:1-5, 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, John 2:1-11

Sunday, January 27: Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a, Luke 4:16-30

What and Why?

~ a Q & A column on the liturgy ~

What are frankincense and myrrh? Good question! The wise men gave three gifts to Jesus: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The valuable gold confessed the majesty of Jesus as our King. Frankincense is incense, a sweet-smelling resin, usually from trees, that is burned during prayer. It confessed that Jesus is our High Priest. Myrrh is a sweet-smelling spice used, among other reasons, to anoint the dead. It confessed that Jesus came to die.

We still use all three of these in worship, and for the same purpose: confessing who Jesus is! By using gold (for communion vessels), incense (for prayer and worship), and myrrh (to anoint the newly baptized), we are confessing that the Jesus at work in us today is the same King, Priest, and Sacrifice who came to Bethlehem 2000 years ago. It's another way to teach the Bible and fill our worship with Scriptural imagery.

The Season of Epiphany

“Epiphany” means “showing forth.” Born of the Virgin at Bethlehem, the Lord showed forth His glory, beginning with the star sent to the magi and continuing through His baptism and public ministry. The season of Epiphany carries us through that time of Jesus’ life and renews our own participation in His outreach and mission.

Colors: white (the innocence of Christ) and green (the new and growing life of Christ)

Symbols: the Star of the East, stars, light, fish and fishnets (signifying the ministry of “fishing for men”).

What comes next? Epiphany leads us to Lent and Christ’s journey to the cross, suffering, and victory.

From the Associate Pastor

1 John 2:12-13 – *“I am writing to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name. I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.”*

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ of Zion,

May the joy of the Incarnation of God saturate your hearts as we transition from the season of Christ to the time after the Epiphany. Jesus was born in order that God Himself would come to you. He set up shop in this world – in time, in history, and certainly in the present by His Spirit through His Word and Sacraments – so you would know He is reaching out to you. This reality of God reaching out to you, to this community, to friend and family, is our big theme and focus at Zion for the time after Epiphany leading us up to Lent.

One place in which we all could do some reaching out, knowing God in Christ has reached out to you first, is in our very own homes and circle of influence. When people hear about outreach or that scary word, evangelism, thoughts often go to knocking on doors for hours on end. Now, if the Holy Spirit is compelling you to do that, God bless you! But if that sounds a bit out of your comfort zone, look no further than your own family to bear witness to. But how does one witness to their own family? With great care, patience, persistence, and prayer.

Perhaps your spouse or your children have wandered from the Way, the Truth, and the Life. As you think about how to reach out to them, it is important to not scold or deride them. In the midst of frustration, it can be easy to lay a thick guilt trip on those we love. Generally, as some of you might have experienced, that doesn't work. Instead of laying on the guilt ask questions to get them talking and thinking. For example, you could ask: “Help me understand why is it you have stopped going to worship or don't want to go to church?” Answers might include job stress, busy family life, or perhaps because they just don't want to. They might have huge God questions that they've been wrestling with and haven't found a safe space to air out those concerns or heard answers to their satisfaction. What you need to do is be prepared for whatever answers that could come your way.

Whatever they share with you, it's important that, even if you disagree with their reasoning, you thank them for talking with you about God and you tell them how the Lord matters so much to you and you want the Lord to matter so much to them because they matter so much to the Lord. Feel free to send them or their questions to Pastor Gjerde, myself, or Vicar Pinzl. We thoroughly love answering those questions and though we might not have all the answers, we can help foster a safe space for the doubts, concerns, fears, or frustrations to be brought up. Also know that if you simply pray with your family, your friends, those in your circle of influence, praying with someone can be a powerful moment to get them thinking once again about the things of God. More could be said, but let this suffice for now!

God's peace to you and yours as you reach out and God in Christ has reached out to you!

Pastor Chris Johnson

Bible Study and Learning Opportunities

Sundays, 10:15 AM: What If Someone Says . . . ”

People have doubts and criticisms of our faith. How do we respond? Each Sunday will take a different challenge to the Christian faith and provide simple, faithful, and compassionate answers. This study will run through January and February.

Jan. 6: *There’s no proof of God.*

Jan. 13: *If God exists, He’s no good.*

Jan. 20: *I don’t believe in “one way.”*

Jan. 27: **Fellowship; bring a friend!**

Tuesdays at 9 AM: Portraits of Conversion

The Holy Bible and church history are filled with examples of *conversion*, or the experience of an unbeliever becoming a believer in Jesus Christ. Studying these Biblical and historical examples of conversion not only inspire us but also teach us about conversion and our own daily conversion.

Thursday Men’s Breakfast at 7:00 AM

We continue exploring the book of Acts in January and February, paying particular attention on how the early church accomplished her outreach, how the church reached out with God’s gifts. We’ll be reading at a brisk pace, looking at 2-3 chapters per week. We will begin the outreach focus on January 3rd, looking at Acts 3-5.

Children’s and Youth Education

Sunday School Pageant

Thank you to the Sunday school children for sharing the Christmas message with our community in our recent pageant. Thank you also to the teaching staff and Kantor Beethe for their leadership.

Sunday School News

Sunday School and Pre-Confirmation Classes will start again on Sunday, January 6.

Confirmation Class

Confirmation class, having taken a break for Christmas, resumes on Wednesday, January 2, at 6:30 p.m., and continues each Wednesday throughout January.

From the Vicar

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9).

Brothers and sisters in Christ a child has been born unto us! That Wonderful Counselor, our Mighty God, has come and now reigns as our Prince of Peace. In this season of Epiphany, we are celebrating together what God has revealed by coming to us in the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. Having come to be our servant King, we are rejoicing in the fact that we who were once not a people, his own possession (1 Pet 2:10). For us then, who now bask in his light, who have seen his glory full of grace and truth (Jn 1:1); we are free to “proclaim his excellencies” as St. Peter would say.

This January, we’d all probably prefer to catch up on some sleep we missed out on during the seasons of Advent and Christmas! But the star of Epiphany shines upon you calling you out as “children of the light, children of the day. We are not of night or of darkness” (1 Thess 5:5). Yes the days are getting longer, “so let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober” (1 Thess 5:6). Being called, and awakened to new life in God, through Christ Jesus the church cannot help but “go out into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15).

This is her charge, her privilege; for “how will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?” (Rom 10:14).

Well thanks be to God; “for how beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news...who says to Zion ‘Your God reigns’” (Is 52:7). Here on this mountain, Zion, you have an abundance of preachers; not only in the pulpit, but from the music shared, to the peace being exchanged, to the invitation extended to others to “come and see” (Jn 1:39) the gospel continues to spread. And as it spreads it does not fail in its task.

The music that bursts forth from these walls, the word that is transmitted over the radio, the devotional resources put out online and in hardcopy, testify to the light that continues to shine out from this body of Christ. Over the past few months, the Holy Spirit has expanded the ministry at Zion. The gospel of Jesus Christ that is preached here has found itself in homes far and wide, and the comfort of his presence has bolstered new communities in the local area.

And to you? Well this very same Spirit will not let you sleep. It will neither let you grow weak or weary. Day by day it will renew your strength so that you too—as part of his royal priesthood—might carry this light into the world. Let it warm your homes through daily prayer and devotion. Let it shine in the workplace and on the street corner. Let it bring all peoples, strangers and loved ones to love and rejoicing in the Lord.

Fides ex Auditu,
Vicar Joe

Mission and Outreach

Monthly Mission Emphases:

- **Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan — Goal: \$2,000**

Mission offerings for January will support Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. (LSS)

Lutheran Social Services (LSS) was founded in 1882. Programs include addictions and corrections; adoptions and foster care; behavioral health; children, youth, and family housing; older adults, persons with disabilities; prison ministries and urban ministries.

LSS mission statement is: “Motivated by the compassion of Christ, we help people improve the quality of their lives.”

Through your prayers and support, we can be part of this worthwhile mission in our community which is needed in our society of today.



Mark Your Calendars
2019 Annual Meeting: January 23, 7 PM

Thank You from the Pastors and Vicar

Thank you to our brothers and sisters at Zion for all your kindness and generosity this season. Your hearts are open to us and our ministry on behalf of Christ, and we give thanks for it. Thank you, too, for the many kind cards and gifts. We pray for God’s peace to be with you all.

“Notes” from the Kantor

“Then opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.” [Matthew 2:11b] These familiar words remind us of the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus. Think of the expense of these offerings and how they traveled to present them. Were these gifts from a “nation” or “community” or personal tokens of esteem? Could we ever match the extravagance of such gifts? Would the message of our Savior compel us to reach out into the community in and around Wausau with “gifts?”



A list of gifts Zion offers outside of our walls might include:

- The radio broadcasts—of which we are in the 81st year! Amazing that this gift, through both radio and internet reach out with the saving message each week! That seems like quite an extravagant “gift!”
- The organ concerts—the series began in 2010 with the new organ’s dedication and continues with subsequent concerts. Zion’s conscious decision to offer a bit of beauty to the community through music is truly another “gift.”
- The availability of festival services and concerts on Wausau Area Access Channel and YouTube allow the music and message of the Gospel to continue.
- In the past few years, several touring groups have performed at Zion. Not only do the traveling musicians share their music with our community, Zion’s building, with the message in the stained glass windows and art work, and the acoustic properties of the building allow the musicians a memorable space in which to perform. The physical building is indeed a “gift” to share.
- Area musicians add beauty to various services—thus enabling the church’s song to be proclaimed in a creative and beautiful fashion.

This certainly isn’t an exhaustive list. Perhaps you have heard children singing or humming a hymn or canticle in your home or neighborhood. Or you may even find yourself leaving the sanctuary with a hymn on your lips! These, too, are ways in which we reach out! The hymns of the church, presented in many ways, provide us with words when we can’t think of anything to say to a hurting friend. Music is a wonderful vehicle with which to share God’s love with those we meet. “Go, Tell It on the Mountain” is a hymn of this season which urges us to “Tell.” The reason “why” is Jesus our Savior is Born!

Joy in Jesus,
Kantor Irene Beethe

Memorials & Other Gifts Received

- **In memory of Mavis Boettcher**, Craig Bergendorf gave a gift for Greater Wausau Christian Services for Jail Ministry.
- **In memory of Kenneth Prieve** (a friend), Gerald and Shirley Kieckhaefer gave a gift to the Hansen Fund.
- **In memory of Sally Lewitzke**, Judy Cherwinka and Dan and Sue Gruetzmacher gave a gift to the Radio Fund.
- **In memory of Sally Lewitzke**, Wendy Miller, Kay Block, Jane Seubert, Ruth Struck, Mary Osea, and Robert and Ann OKeefe gave a gift for new Lutheran Book of Worship hymnals.
- **In memory of Ray Kurth**, Ruth Draeger and Dan and Sue Gruetzmacher gave a gift to the Radio Fund.
- **In memory of Ray Kurth**, Judy Cherwinka gave a gift to Open Door Ministry.
- **In memory of Ray Kurth**, Gerald and Shirley Kieckhaefer gave a gift to the Hansen Fund.
- **In memory of Ray Kurth**, William, Ruth Ann and Lynn Ott gave a gift to Undesignated Special Funds.
- **In memory of Ray Kurth**, Verna Schuett gave a gift to the Chapel Art Fund.
- **In memory of Mavis Boettcher**, Dave and Lori Torkko gave a gift to Strassenfest.
- **In memory of Mavis Boettcher**, Ruth Draeger and Dan and Sue Gruetzmacher gave a gift to the Radio Fund.
- **In memory of Denise Lee**, Delores Falk gave a gift to Undesignated Special Funds.



News and Events

80+ Birthdays in January

January 6 Leota Stapel, 801 Parcher St., Apt. G203, Wausau 54403
January 6 Jan Gaugush, 1807 E Crabtree Dr., Wausau 54401
January 13 Wayne Berg, 2101 McIntosh St., Wausau 54403
January 14 Gabe Hollander, 429 Lazy Way., Wausau 54401
January 22 Arnie Luechau, 211 Lakeview Dr., Wausau 54403

Women of Zion

Women of Zion will be meeting on Wednesday, January 2, 2019 at 1:30 p.m. Our program will be a demonstration on Chair Yoga by Denise. We will also have a short business meeting to begin planning our Winter Tea in February and refreshments will be served. Please come and learn about this wonderful exercise that any one can do. Start the new year out on a healthy note!



Winter Tea

Mark your calendars for Zion's Winter Tea! To be held Sunday, February 10th, 2:00-5:00 p.m. in the church hall. Tickets will be on sale at the church office starting January 7th. Come and enjoy a festive event!

Sponsors for 2019 Radio Broadcasts, Flowers at the Altar, and Worship Bulletins

The sponsor charts are available for you to sign up, and are located by the stairs by the northwest entry of Zion. Many dates are available for 2019 for you to sponsor during the year for your special occasion, memorial, etc.

- \$200 is the cost for a radio broadcast for one person to sponsor. If two different persons want to co-sponsor a broadcast on the same date, then it costs \$100 for each person.
- \$60 is the cost to sponsor two bouquets of flowers at the altar. You may choose to pick up your flowers after 12:00 noon on Sunday; or you may designate flowers to be given to Zion's shut-ins.
- \$20 is the cost to sponsor worship bulletins. If the broadcast and flowers are sponsored on a date you wanted, you may consider sponsoring the worship bulletins. Please call the church office, as there is no chart for sponsoring bulletins.

There are many dates available for 2019, so please check the charts and sign up; or you may call the church office at 715-848-7286.



ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
709 SIXTH STREET
WAUSAU WI 54403-4791

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Come—Worship the Lord!

- Sundays 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.
- Saturdays 5:15 p.m.
- Wednesdays 10:00 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.

Where you can reach us:

Church — 715-848-7286

Fax — 715-848-7286

Email — zion@dwave.net

Web: zionlutheranwausau.com

A member of Lutheran CORE