



# Zion Lutheran Church

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

**February 22, 2026**

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## Remembering

*Examples of the faith in February*

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### February 23: St. Polycarp



A student of St. John the Apostle, St. Polycarp was bishop of Smyrna and may have been ordained to that post by St. John himself. He thus serves as an important link between the early Church and the apostles. He was martyred for refusing to honor the Roman emperor as a divine lord. At first, he was burned at the stake, but when the fires did not kill him, he was stabbed to death. He authored a letter to the Philippians.

## Pastoral Letter

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*The tempter came and said to Jesus, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." ~ Matthew 4:3-4*



In the famous 1980 "Miracle on Ice" game that pitted USA versus Russia, Coach Herb Brooks repeated the following phrase over and over in the 3<sup>rd</sup> period as the impossible was about to become possible: "Play your game." Why repeat the same thing during such a tense time? Well, why not repeat what those boys had been focused on for the past 6 months? They know the game they've been taught. The game doesn't change just because you're facing Russia and, surprise of surprises, now winning. "Play your game."

The same can be said about the Christian life. The Christian life can be complicated, with seemingly impossible odds placed against us. Apart from the Word of God, it will remain complicated, impossible to please God without faith, without the Word (Hebrews 11:6). Apart from the Word of God we remain on the hamster wheel of life, often feeling like we're going nowhere fast. Or worse, facing a Goliath while being woefully unprepared. "Apart from me, you can do nothing" once spoke our Lord (John 15:5).

The Lord, however, in His mercy has given us His Word, the vehicle by which heaven comes to earth, the future enters the present, eternal life invades a world shrouded in death. Quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3, Jesus throws the power of the Word at Satan: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." This is how we play the game of life: Blessed with the Word of God, filled with the Word of God, having the Word of God reverberating in our eyes and before our eyes.

To "Play your Game" as Christians we heed the Word over and over again. There is no other Word by which man can be saved. There is no other Word as valuable. There is no other Word that makes the impossible possible. We're in the 3<sup>rd</sup> period now (1 Corinthians 10:11), "Play your game."

Peace be with you,  
Pastor Johnson

## Understanding Lent

*the liturgy leads us*

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*I wash my hands in innocence  
and go around your altar, O LORD,  
proclaiming thanksgiving aloud,  
and telling all your wondrous deeds. ~ Psalm 26:6-7*

What is Lent? Lent is:

- + the Church proclaiming Christ's sufferings in a big way
- + the Spirit forming the Church in the way of that suffering.

The first part is *faith*, trusting the work of Jesus for everything. The second part is *love*, living for others under the cross.

Both parts *give thanks* for the grace of God and *tell His wondrous deeds*. We have nothing better to tell, and the liturgy of Lent help us tell it.

It all has to do with this word: *emptied*. Or, if you prefer, *stripped*.

To start with *emptied*: Jesus began to suffer at His conception. From that point forward, He poured out His divine glory for our sake:

*... Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God,  
did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,  
but emptied himself, by taking the form of a slave,  
being born in the likeness of men.  
And being found in human form,  
he humbled himself by becoming obedient  
to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Phil. 1:5-8)*

We tell of God's grace by telling how Jesus emptied Himself for us. Bit by bit, He was stripped of all honor, glory, and power until at last He was "crucified in weakness," a



“curse for us” (2 Cor. 13:4, Gal. 3:13). How does the Lenten liturgy proclaim this emptying of Christ, the stripping and shearing of all His honors?

It gradually *empties* and *strips* the Church of her Easter worship, beginning in Pre-Lent:

- **Farewell to the Alleluia.** Alleluia is the Church’s Easter cry of joy— “Alleluia! Christ is risen!” Yet the liturgy strips that word away from us at the end of Epiphany, the first sign that Lent is coming.
- **Pre-Lent (Gesimatide).** The three Sundays before Lent draw us—strip us—away from the world by calling us to prepare for the Lenten fast.
- **Ash Wednesday.** On this day, the Church is emptied of many things: *pride and sin*, as we confess our sins; *feasting*, as we take up the Lenten fast; *treasure*, as we commit to a more generous charity; and *self-concern*, and we intensify our practice of prayer.
- **Goodbye, Gloria.** The *Gloria* is the hymn of praise sung at Holy Communion (“Glory to God in the highest . . .”). Lent strips away that hymn of praise, and empties us of other, more joyful songs, throughout the 40 days.
- **Passiontide.** On the Fifth Sunday in Lent, as Holy Week nears, we are stripped of (we start *fasting from*) still more: images, which are covered; and the minor Gloria (“Glory be to the Father . . .”).
- **Stripping the Altar; No Communion.** At the end of Maundy Thursday, the *emptying* of Lent culminates in the stripping of the altar and the removal of Holy Communion. Here is a stark, visual portrayal of Christ’s own stripping, death, and burial in the tomb. Now it’s all gone, from alleluia to altar.

Lent strengthens *faith* by leading us into a deeper and deeper deprivation of Easter worship as a way of illustrating the sufferings of Christ that Lent preaches. It also strengthens *love* by teaching us that Christians live by *giving things away* and not by holding onto things for themselves.

From start to finish, Lent helps us give thanks for Christ’s passion and learn how tell of His wondrous deeds through a life conformed to His image.

## Lent 2026: Wednesdays

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### *Lenten Midweek Sermon Series:*

### **Devoted: Praying Day by Day**

*Lord, teach us to pray.* With our Lord, we will seek a deeper and more focused practice of daily prayer. Our guide will be Holy Scripture and the Daily Prayers provided in the Small Catechism. They teach us to mark morning, evening, and mealtime with remembrance of Holy Baptism, the Word of God, petition, and thanksgiving. These simple practices exercise our union with Jesus Christ, through whom all our prayers come to the throne of God.

**When:** Wednesdays, February 18—March 25  
**Time:** 12:15 PM (Holy Communion)  
6:30 PM (Vespers)

<i>February 18:</i>	<i>Practicing Your Righteousness</i>
<b>February 25:</b>	Morning Prayer
<b>March 4:</b>	Evening Prayer
<b>March 11:</b>	Asking a Blessing
<b>March 18:</b>	Returning Thanks
<b>March 25:</b>	Keep Watch with Me



### *Lenten Midweek Study*

### **Faith, the Highest Service**

Scripture presents *faith in Christ* as your *daily, priestly* service before God. This study will explore that daily service, the practices that accompany it, the virtue and moral character that spring from it, and the deep, abiding strength and comfort it delivers to believers.

**When:** Wednesdays, February 18—March 25  
**Time:** 7:20 PM (after Vespers in Church Hall)

<i>February 18:</i>	<i>Brief Introduction and Overview (15-30 min.)</i>
<b>February 25:</b>	“The Royal Priesthood”
<b>March 4:</b>	“A Broken Spirit, a Contrite Heart”
<b>March 11:</b>	“Praise, Lips that Acknowledge Him”
<b>March 18:</b>	“Do Good and Share”
<b>March 25:</b>	“A Living Sacrifice”

## Lent 2026: Sundays

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### *Lenten Weekend Sermon Series:*

### **What Are You Worth?**

Social media, the love of money, AI, and the impure world all threaten to cheapen your value in the eyes of the world. Yet in your worthy and honorable Savior, Jesus, God secures for you an enduring value beyond all imagination. You are worth more than you do; more than your best qualities; more than all you possess; and more than your own life.

**When:** Saturday-Sunday, February 21—March 29  
**Time:** 5:15 PM (Saturday)  
9 and 11 AM (Sunday)

<i>February 22:</i>	<i>What is Priceless?</i>
<b>March 1:</b>	More than You
<b>March 8:</b>	More than His Family
<b>March 15:</b>	More than His Miracle
<b>March 22:</b>	More than His Nation
<b>March 29:</b>	More than His Life



### *Lenten Sunday Study*

### **Crucified Power**

Jesus did more with His hands and feet nailed to wood than we do in all our running and doing. By His weakness, the surrender of His rights and His inactivity in the grave, He overthrew the prince and powers of this age. That hidden victory gives His Church a backwards kind of power, a *crucified power* that triumphs more through faith, suffering, obedience, and death than the world can imagine.

**When:** Sundays, February 22—March 29  
**Time:** 10:15 AM (Church Hall)



## Praying

*in our prayers this week*

**Persecuted Christians in:** Saudi Arabia, Myanmar, Mali

**Missionaries:** Chris & Janine Pluger, Lutheran Bible Translators

**Zion Lutheran Classical Academy:** its establishment and growth

### Comfort, Healing, Recovery:

Matthew Berg & Family

The Family of Jan Bresnahan

The Family of Bill McDonald

The Family of Brenda Plautz



### Those who need our on-going prayers:

Zion's Homebound Members

Magdalena Doskey (*Lee Anderton's granddaughter*)

Sarah Hemingway (*Lee Anderton's daughter*)

Larry Hegland      Avery Kluck      Barb Langbecker

Barb Ramker      Darrin Stanke      Anna Tanck

Kim Torkko

## Operation Baby Bottle Fundraiser

At every entrance of the church, you will find baskets full of baby bottle banks. You are invited to take them home, fill them with coins, bills or checks, and return them to the church by March 15. They will be given back to Hope Life Center to use to support their mission (see pg. 10).



The graphic features a dark background with a pattern of white diagonal lines. On the left, a circular logo contains the text 'HOPE OBB' with a heart symbol above the 'O' in 'HOPE'. To the right of the logo is a QR code. Below the QR code, the text 'OPERATION BABY BOTTLE FUNDRAISER' is written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters. On the right side, there are four horizontal buttons with icons and text: a bottle icon for 'PICK UP A BOTTLE', a dollar sign icon for 'FILL THE BOTTLE', a church icon for 'RETURN THE BOTTLE', and a heart icon for 'THANK YOU!'. At the bottom, a dark bar contains the text 'OR GIVE ONLINE: HOPEWI.ORG / DONATE' in white.

## Soup in Lent

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**Lunch:** The soup lunches will be carry-out, 12:45/1:00 PM, available after the noon Lenten service. An order will be \$10 and will include a quart of soup, bread/crackers and a dessert. There is a sign-up sheet in the Church Office, and orders are due the Monday before the date the soup will be served (*see below*).

**Supper:** The soup suppers will be served in-person in the fellowship hall, 5:15-6:15 PM, before the Lenten worship service and will include soup, bread/crackers, desserts and drinks. A free-will offering will be collected. You do not need to sign-up for the evening meals; just come as you are!

Plan to join us for the following Wednesdays:

*February 18 .... Potato*  
*February 25 .... Chicken Noodle*  
**March 4 ..... Beef Barley**  
**March 11 ..... Zuppa Toscana**  
**March 18..... Chili**  
**March 25 ..... Minestrone**

Call Lynn Budnik (715-446-1474) to help in any of these ways:

- ⇒ People to make **homemade desserts** every week
- ⇒ People to **serve** at 5:30pm and/or **clean-up** after the evening meals

### **Carryout Soup Sign-ups:**

If you would like to order Carryout Soup for March 4, please stop by the office (or call), and put your order on the sign up sheet. Orders are due by Monday, March 2, but payment will not be collected until you pick up your order.

## ***\*This Weekend\** Family Game Night**

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Join on us on Sunday, March 1 from 3-6 PM for an evening of fun and fellowship, pizza and other refreshments! Each family is encouraged to bring their favorite game to share. We'll also have extra games just in case. All ages are welcome to this event hosted by Zion's Sunday School. Please let us know in advance if you plan on attending and how many will be with you so we'll have enough food and refreshments to go around!



## Catechumenate

*learning the gifts*

### Youth Education

Sundays: **Sunday School, 10:00 AM**  
(Pre-K through Grade 6)

Wednesdays: **Confirmation** (Grade 7 and Older)



### Bible Study (*Fellowship Hall*)

Tuesdays: **Bible Study, 9 AM** “The Gospel of John”

Thursdays: **Men’s Bible Study, 8 AM** “Romans”

## Outreach and Mercy

*sharing and being the gifts*

- **Camp Luther — Goal: \$2,500**
- **Hope Life Center — Goal: \$2,500**

### **Featured this Week: Hope Life Center:**

Hope Life Center moved from Wausau's west side to the east side in November last year.

Hope is now located at 330 Grand Ave., Suite 100. Hope offers information on pregnancy

options in a confidential, judgment-free environment. They provide free services, resources and encouragement to help clients make good decisions for their future. FREE services include pregnancy testing, ultrasounds to confirm pregnancy, counseling services, and information for pregnancy options. They also provide parenting and pregnancy resources. Hope does not offer abortion services or referrals. Their website is [www.hopewi.org](http://www.hopewi.org) and they are available Mon.-Thurs., 8am to 4pm. Their phone number is 715-843-4673. Zion is currently joining in Hope’s Operation Baby Bottle (OBB) fundraiser. (See page 8 for more information about how to donate.)



## Current Season: Lent

Theme: *Return to the Lord Your God*  
Starts: Ash Wednesday (sundown, February 17)  
Ends: Evening Service, Maundy Thursday (April 2)  
Colors: Red-Violet: the color of royalty and the physical sufferings of Christ

## **BLC Choir Concert at Zion**

*May 12*

The Concert Choir, handbells, and Martha Singers of Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota, will perform at Zion on **Tuesday, May 12, at 7:00 PM.** There is no cost for admission; an offering will be received. Zion will serve dinner to the singers and their leaders at 5:00 PM that day. To volunteer for help, please contact the church office.



Bethany Lutheran College is the college of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, preparing followers of Christ for vocation in family, church, and the world. For more information, visit [www.blc.edu](http://www.blc.edu).

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## **Evangelical Lutheran Synod: Online Resources**

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod has several online resources for you to use.

**Daily Devotions.** Brief, daily devotions entitled "Light for My Path" allow the church's worship heritage to speak: they utilize a Bible verse or two, hymn verses, and a prayer. These devotions may be found at [www.els.org/dailydevotions](http://www.els.org/dailydevotions).



**"One Little Word."** Monthly videos, posted by ELS president, Pr. Glenn Obenberger, lead us in reflection on the word of God in keeping with the church year: [www.els.org/onelittleword](http://www.els.org/onelittleword).

**Good News For You.** A devotional book, written by ELS pastors, is available for free and downloadable in a PDF format. It addresses everything from "I'm Having a Rough Day" to "Have I Wasted My Life?" to "How Can You Know God Exists?" Access it at [www.els.org/wp-content/files/bho/GoodNewsforYou2020.pdf](http://www.els.org/wp-content/files/bho/GoodNewsforYou2020.pdf).



## Zion Kantorei Invitation

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Do you love to sing? Would you like to join a welcoming, enthusiastic group of your sisters and brothers in Christ to proclaim the Gospel through music? If so, now is a great time to add your voice to the Zion Kantorei. Prior choral experience is helpful but not required. We will teach you what you need to know! We rehearse on Thursday evenings from 6:30 PM-8:00 PM and sing for Sunday morning services 2-3 times each month. Contact Kantor Drengler at [Jacob.drengler@zionlutheranwausau.com](mailto:Jacob.drengler@zionlutheranwausau.com) or speak to him after any worship service for more information. All are welcome!



## News & Events

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### Lenten Organ Meditations

The Wisconsin River Chapter of the American Guild of Organists will present a series of Lenten Meditations. These 30 minute recitals presented by area organists, will be held from 12:15—12:45pm at 1st Presbyterian Church (406 Grant St., Wausau) on the following Fridays:



- February 27—Irene Beethe
- March 6—Patrick Burkhardt, Mark Schroeder, and Isaac Tritz
- March 13—George Felty
- March 20—Dan Larson
- March 27—Bryan Higgins-Moe and Jacob Drengler

A free-will donation will be received. Come for a time of meditation and music during your lunch hour!

### Winter Tea: Thank You

A big thank you to everyone who helped in any capacity to make the Women of Zion's Winter Tea a success! The event was held the afternoon of February 15th and was a picture of ambiance and fellowship. We hope to see you next year!



### Quilting at Zion

The quilters plan to gather next on March 16 at 1:00PM in the Church Hall. If you have any questions, please contact Carol Watson at 715-216-0696. See you there!



## News & Events

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### 80+ Birthdays in March

Mar. 9 Dick Ames, 1616 Marten St., Wausau 54401

Mar. 16 Lorry Kleinschmidt, 1321 E. Bridge St., Wausau 54403

Mar. 21 Bruce Thornton, 306 Camellia Ave., Inverness, FL 34452

Mar. 22 Richard Dennis, 1237 Jefferson St., Wausau 54403

Mar. 22 Ed Martin, 1233 Le Messurier St., Wausau 54403

Mar. 27 Joan Pospychala, 2912 N. 12th St., Wausau 54403

Mar. 29 Eldon Pagel, 232570 Pond Crest Rd., Wausau 54403



### Thrivent Choice Dollars Program

Eligible benefit members of Thrivent Financial may now recommend where Thrivent distributes a portion of its charitable dollars.

**thrivent**<sup>®</sup>

You can request that Zion be given your charitable dollars. Call 1-800-847-4836 and say "Thrivent Choice"; or on the internet:

[www.Thrivent.com/thriventchoice](http://www.Thrivent.com/thriventchoice). ***Designations must be made by March 31, 2026.***

### *\*Save the Dates\* 22nd Annual Presentation of Bow The Knee*

You are invited to the dramatic musical Easter drama, **BOW THE KNEE**, at Trinity Lutheran Church, 107 N State St., Merrill (March 21 at 7PM & March 22 at 2:30PM) and at Zion Lutheran Church, 238145 Star Rd, Aniwa (March 28 at 7PM & March 29 at 2:30PM). Come follow Anthony, a Roman centurion, whose life is changed when he encounters Jesus. Free admission.



## Bible Quiz

Use one word (perhaps in different forms) for all the blanks to complete this Scripture passage:

"Dear friends, let us \_\_\_\_ one another, for \_\_\_\_ comes from God. Everyone who \_\_\_\_ has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not \_\_\_\_ does not know God, because God is \_\_\_\_."

- A. believe
- B. help
- C. love
- D. forgive



Answer: (See 1 John 4:7-8, NIV)



## ZION'S EASTER DECORATING FUND 2026

Zion's tradition at this time of the year is to accept gifts as Thank Offerings, Memorials, and/or for the Beauty of God's House for the Easter Decorating Fund. The **Easter Decorating Fund** pays for the beautiful flowers in the chancel on Easter morning, April 5, and all of our special advertising.

**The deadline for your gift is Friday, March 27.**

*Return your gift to the church office or the offering boxes. Thank you!*

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount given \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Please designate your gift:*

Your envelope # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Thank Offering

\_\_\_\_\_ Beauty of God's House

\_\_\_\_\_ In Loving Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

*Given by (if different than your name above):*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Calendar

*for the upcoming week*

### **Sunday • March 1 (*Lent 2*)**

9:00 AM Holy Communion; Live Radio Broadcast,  
WSAU 550 AM  
10:00 AM Sunday School  
10:15 AM Fellowship  
10:15 AM Bible Study  
11:00 AM Holy Communion  
3:00 PM Family Game Night  
(*see pg. 9*)



### **Monday • March 2**

8:30 AM Devotion, Facebook  
12:15 PM Holy Communion  
8:30 PM Compline, Facebook

### **Tuesday • March 3**

8:30 AM Devotion, Facebook  
9:00 AM Bible Study  
10:30 AM Staff Meeting  
12:15 PM Holy Communion  
5:30 PM Handbells  
8:30 PM Compline, Facebook

### **Wednesday • March 4**

8:30 AM Word at the Middle of the Week, Facebook  
12:15 PM Holy Communion  
12:45 PM Carryout Soup (*see pg. 9*)  
5:15 PM Lenten Soup Supper (*see pg. 9*)  
6:30 PM Vespers  
7:20 PM Lenten Midweek Study (*see pg. 6*)  
7:30 PM Confirmation  
8:30 PM Compline, Facebook

### **Thursday • March 5**

8:00 AM Men's Bible Study  
8:30 AM Devotion, Facebook  
9AM—12PM Pastors' Meeting  
12:15 PM Holy Communion  
6:30 PM Kantorei  
8:30 PM Compline, Facebook

### **Friday • March 6**

12:15 PM Holy Communion

### **Saturday • March 7 (*Sts. Perpetua and Felicitas*)**

5:15 PM Holy Communion



**ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**709 N SIXTH STREET**  
**WAUSAU WI 54403-4791**

**ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED**

*Where you can reach us:*

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