



The hymn, Silent Night, Holy Night, was written over 200 years ago. In 1816, a parish priest, Joseph Mohr, in the village of Oberndorf, near Salzburg, Austria, composed a poem. Two years later, in 1818, as the story goes, he was concerned about Christmas Mass as the organ needed repairing. Joseph brought his poem about the nativity to a teacher and musician named Franz Xaver Gruber from Upper Austria. Franz composed the tune, and the song Silent Night was born on December 24, 1818. That night, Joseph and Franz sang Silent Night accompanied by the guitar.

In only a few years, the song spread from Austria across Europe and on to the rest of the world. It has been translated into 300 languages and dialects. It is the most recorded Christmas song of all time, and by artists from many different genres.

Rarely do we tire of hearing this song, and for many, Christmas Eve worship isn't complete without it. This song seeps into our souls and gives us hope. It connects people together, no matter race, heritage, age, or church denomination.

The first verse draws us in with the image of the peaceful, holy family. The second verse takes a turn, bursting open this silent and holy night with the voices of the heavenly hosts singing alleluia praises. The shepherds below are quaking in fear. Finally, the third verse brings us the good news promise of redeeming grace through our Lord, Jesus.

Looking back on this year, there was much pain, suffering, and tragedy. Wildfires, hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, famines, wars, and more have ravaged the lives of thousands. Violence and hatred have taken lives in our streets, places of worship, and schools. The political divide is deep and distressing. In our own town, there are those without a warm place to lay their head, enough food to eat, and clothes to wear. Illness, grief, and brokenness consume.

Where does God burst through with redeeming grace? Dollars given to Lutheran Disaster Relief bring aid to the suffering. Food trucks, monthly meals, and turkey dinners help those in our community feed their families, and they communicate, You are a beloved child of God. Prayers and advocacy bring about healing and justice. Time spent listening and visiting comforts the sad and lonely. Quilts wrap people in loving care. The mission and ministry of the church becomes the love of God for the world.

In the silence of the night, God bursts into the world, bringing grace and peace. There could be no better news this day or this season. Thanks be to God!

Advent and Christmas blessings,
Pastor Elizabeth Martin

Community Meal

We expected more than 58 people to attend the November Community Meal, but those who did attend had plenty to eat. Soup and grilled cheese sandwiches were served. In addition to eating 77 grilled cheese sandwiches, our guests had a choice of tomato, vegetable, or chicken noodle soup. Cupcakes and brownies were dessert. It was a perfect meal on that cold, rainy November night.



Many thanks go out to the following volunteers who made this meal possible: Larry, Tammy, Kathy, Judy, Nancy, Dawn, Wayne, Stephanie, Marge, and Sandra.

The next meal will be on Wednesday, December 10th. If you would like to help set up, cook, serve, or clean up, it is important that you put your name on the volunteer sign-up sheet. It is posted on the bulletin board in the narthex.

John Enright

Pioneer News

Pioneer Club



Pioneer Lunch will be held on Monday, December 8th at noon. We will have turkey breast & ham for a small donation. Lyle & Patti will provide sweet potatoes and a dessert.

Please bring a dish to share and your own table service. Our entertainment will be the "A Classic Chorale". (A group that Dawn Calkins performs in).

If a few of you could bring an extra dessert it would be appreciated as they would enjoy a little treat when done singing.

Thanks & look forward to seeing you all!

Lyle & Patti Lee

Community Foundation Awards



The Boone County Community Foundation awarded Zion Lutheran Church \$1500 for our Food Truck distribution program. John Enright accepted the check from BCCF president Scott Greenlee at the Community Breakfast held at the museum November 18, 2025.

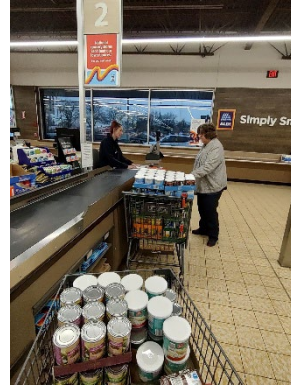
Zion's partner organization, The Baby Bank, was granted \$3500 for diapers and infant supplies. We are thankful for all of our community's support.

Christ in Our Home Daily Devotionals are available for pick up in the office.



Women of Zion

Tom, Jenny-O and Sara Lee would like to thank the congregation for their generosity towards our Thanksgiving Dinners for First Step Day Care families. We were able to raise enough funds for 44 dinner baskets, each containing a \$30.00 gift card for their choice of meat. Thank you also to the Women of Zion for the matching funds and Thrivent for Lutherans (we received a \$250.00 grant).



Zion's Angel tree will be up on November 30th. On a star is the name of a child from First Step Daycare along with their sizes and likes. Once you have made your selection, please sign your name next to the number and your phone number. Please give the gift back to our tree by December 14th. Please securely attach the star on your package.

Helping Hands Network and the Holmes Production is sponsoring their Annual Christmas Concert and Toys for Tots. The concert will be performed at the Community building in Belvidere on Friday December 12th at 7:00p.m. Refreshments will be available to purchase; there will be gift baskets for a silent auction. The cost is \$5.00 and an unwrapped toy. Invite a friend, and come and enjoy the sounds of the season. 100% of the proceeds will go to benefit families in Boone County. (Zion Lutheran Church is a member of the Helping Hands Network)

Community Care Drive

Zion is one of the drop-off points for a collection arranged by The Maternal Child Health Council. They are collecting essential health and hygiene items to support newly arriving immigrant families and our community members. There is a yellow bin in the entryway that will receive your donations through December 12th.

They are accepting: diapers (baby & adult), baby formula and food, hygiene supplies (shampoo, body wash, bar soap, toothpaste), adult incontinence pads, underwear, socks, and feminine hygiene items.



Hometown Ornament Making



Zion's Youth

- **Tuesday, December 2**-Decorate the float for the parade. 710 Pearl Street, Belvidere 6pm-8pm
- **Friday, December 5**- Home Town Christmas parade - Line up at 5:00 We will walk alongside CASA and pass out Stocking Hats and cards with Zion's information.
- **Saturday, December 20**-Christmas program practice 10am – noon
- **Sunday, December 21**-Christmas program; During the service
- **Friday, January 9**-5:30 pm-It is Retro night at the skating rink. There will be a DJ and lights. The cost of ice skating and skate rental is being donated by Jean and Jim Twyning. We will walk up to Sips and Sprinkles when we are done for walking tacos \$8 or hotdogs/fries \$10 with a soda or hot chocolate. **Back up date is January 23 if weather doesn't agree.**
- **Friday, February 6 - Sunday, February 8** Wisconsin Dells water park. We will be staying in a condo at Glacier Canyon which is attached to the Wilderness. \$25 a person to help cover the food/drinks/snacks. We will eat in the rooms. The price of the water park is included. Extra spending money can be brought for arcade games, or other activities at the resort. Once I know who is going, we will figure out departure times. We will be back by 2:00 on Sunday.
- **Ski Trip planned for Monday, February 16 (No school).** Cascade Mountain in Wisconsin. We will meet at the church at 12:00 and leave by 12:15. We will ski from 3 - 8 pm. Adults (13 and above) \$60 lift ticket/Rentals \$42 Kids under 13 Free with adult/ Rentals \$42. Those wanting to snow tube it is \$45 for 7 and above, \$25 for 6 and younger. We will need to get tickets ahead of time. They only allow so many on the mountain. Sign up by February 10th if you are interested.

Please let Jody know as soon as possible what activities you will be able to attend. 815-978-1691

A Blue Christmas Service



As we approach the Christmas season, for most, it is full of joy, family fun, and holiday cheer. For others the season is anything but “the most wonderful time of the year,” because they are grieving or dealing with other struggles and losses.

The idea behind the Blue Christmas service is to create space for the acknowledgment of the heaviness often carried during this season, as well as offering the hope that Jesus gives. The Bible clearly acknowledges and makes space for pain, struggle,

hardship, and tears — and so should we. The Blue service is all about creating a moment during a season that is noisy with celebration, to acknowledge the “both/and” of our emotions.

Pastor Elizabeth invites you to join her on Saturday, December 20, at 4:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall for a Blue Christmas service. We will share together in prayer, song, scripture, reflections, lighting candles, and the support of Christian community. All are welcome.

Treasurer Update - 2025

REMINDER: If you are planning on making a year-end donation to Zion, be sure that your donation is either **received in church on or before December 31st or postmarked by December 31st.**

You will be receiving your 4th quarter giving statements around the middle of January 2026, and if you feel something is not correct, let the Church office know as soon as possible. Phone # 815.547.6102 or zionlutheran1300@gmail.com

THANK YOU for your generous giving and dedication to Zion. **We are a Caring Congregation committed to Sharing Christ's Love with the World.** Thank you, and God Bless You!



Happy Birthday from your Zion Family!



1-Mary Sell
1-Bill Vorndran
1-Kevin Watts
4-Stephanie Cordray
8-Larry Brendum

11-Linda Johnson
16-Rick Zediker
17-Traci Thies
18-Jaxxen Sipe
18-Emsley Foley

24-Ken Beever
26-Don Sell
28-Ken Downey
28-Cailyn Kottman

From the Treasurer:

General Fund

Oct/2025 Beginning Balance \$ 20,679.39
Total Income \$ 12,925.09
Total Expense \$ 21,584.16
Balance \$ 12,020.32

Building Fund

Oct/2025 Beginning Balance \$(8,103.20)
Total Income \$ 3,239.54
Total Expense \$ 2,415.82
Balance * \$ (7,279.48)

General Fund Reserve Savings

Oct/2025 Beginning Balance \$ 88,938.70
Income \$ 20.10
Expenses \$
Balance \$ 88,958.80

Council Members

Term Through January 2026

Melody Johnson
David Schumann
Gary Yunto

Term Through January 2027

Kris Enright
Michelle Ernest
Kelly Kotajarvi
Terry Miller

Term Through January 2028

Jody Archer
Dawn Calkins
Jeanne Marnen
Stephanie Skelnik

Worship Schedule

Sundays at 9:00 am
Thursday at 7:00 pm

Find Worship Videos at
www.zionbelvidere.com

OR

On Facebook at
[ZionBelvidere+](https://www.facebook.com/ZionBelvidere/)

Email
zionlutheran1300@gmail.com

Staff & Leadership

Rev. Elizabeth Martin
Intentional Interim Pastor

Mandy Minson
Administrative Assistant

David Schumann
Council President

Dan Albrecht
Choir Director

Melody Johnson & Melita Ogan
Sunday School Directors

Jody Archer
Director of Children and Youth
Ministries

Diane Vorndran
Financial Secretary

Sharon Yunto
Treasurer

Texts for the Month of December

December 7

Isaiah 11:1-10
Romans 15:4-13
Matthew 3:1-12

December 14

Isaiah 35:1-10
James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11

December 21

Isaiah 7:10-16
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-25

December 28

Isaiah 63:7-9
Hebrews 2:10-18
Matthew 2:13-23

December 2025						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Worship & Music Meeting 5pm	2 In Pursuit of Paul Study & Soup Lunch 11:30am	3 Bible Study 9:30am Baby Bank 4pm-6pm Decorating Tree for Hometown Christmas 5:30pm	4 Choir 5pm/Bells 6pm Barnabas Meeting 6pm 7:00 pm – Worship	5 Office Closed Hometown Christmas Parade 5pm	6
7 Sunday Worship 9am & Sunday School Adult Bible Study after service Confirmation Class 10:20am-1pm	8 Pioneer Lunch 12:00pm Witness Meeting 6pm	9 In Pursuit of Paul Study & Soup Lunch 11:30am	10 Council Reports Due by 9am Bible Study 9:30am Community Meal 5pm-6pm	11 Choir 5pm/Bells 6pm 7:00 pm – Worship	12 Office Closed	13
14 Sunday Worship 9am & Sunday School Cantata Generosity Celebration Sunday Adult Bible Study after service	15	16 In Pursuit of Paul Study & Soup Lunch 11:30am	17 Bible Study 9:30am Council Meeting 6pm	18 Choir 5pm/Bells 6pm 7:00 pm – Holden Sundae Worship	19 Office Closed	20 Christmas Program Practice 10am-12pm Blue Christmas Worship Service 4pm
21 Sunday Worship 9am/No Sunday School Kid's Christmas Program Adult Bible Study after service Craft making 10:15am-11:15am	22 Tiding Articles Due by 9am	23	24 OFFICE CLOSED Christmas Eve Worship Service 5pm	25 Christmas Day Office Closed NO Worship	26 Office Closed	27
28 Sunday Worship 9am/Lessons & Carols No Sunday School No Adult Bible Study	29	30	31 New Year's Eve OFFICE CLOSED	1 New Year's Day Office Closed NO p.m. Worship	OFFICE HOURS Monday-Thursday 9am-1pm Closed Fridays	

