

## The Light that Guides Our Transitions

Epiphany blessings!

The Season of Epiphany began on January 6th, when we honored the arrival of the Magi, who came from faraway places to worship Jesus, bringing him gifts. This meeting became a sign that the light of Christ was to spread to the whole world. Some of the themes of Epiphany are light, baptism, and discipleship. The light of the star that led the Magi to Jesus pulls us into this season of light, where Christ is shown and revealed to us.

A few weeks ago, I headed out early in the morning, well before sunrise, to be with someone before surgery. As I backed out of my drive and turned onto the street, my headlights shone across the lawn. I gasped at the site! The lawn looked like someone had sprinkled it with glitter. The lights shining through the morning darkness reflected off the frost in a magical array.

Often, even in scripture, darkness is considered in the negative. And yet, I think it to be a positive part of light being revealed, for I would not have seen the beauty of the frost without the darkness surrounding the festival of glitter. Without the chaos of darkness in God's creating, the light would not have been needed. And note that God does not do away with darkness; it is still half of our days and needed for life. The Magi could only see the star that guided them to Christ because of the contrast in the darkness, which reveals all the heavenly glories of our night sky.

The sun was rising as I entered my development on the way home from the surgery center that day. What a joy to be up and outside that early to witness a beautiful, colorful sunrise. Two fantastic displays of light in one morning. It gave me hope and encouragement for the day.

At our annual meeting, I announced my retirement on January 31, 2026. Wayne and I are excited to begin this next season of our lives and have many personal reasons for doing so earlier rather than later. I am also sad to share this news with you at Zion. We love being a part of this congregation! And we also feel so much love and appreciation from you. When I leave I will have been your pastor for two and a half years. I consider this time with you to be a great blessing.

So, what does this mean for Zion? You have spent the last year and a half healing. I hear you tell me how relieved you feel from the stress, that people talk and greet each other on Sunday mornings, and that Zion seems more unified. You have kept your mission at the forefront. Now is the time for you to begin a process called Transition. You will have a Transition Team to lead in this effort. They will guide the congregation through a process of identifying who you have been, are today, and are hopeful to be in the future. They will take the input and feedback from the congregation and devise your Ministry Site Profile. The synod will use this to identify prospective pastoral candidates, and it is what candidates will read to be informed about Zion. The next step will be the formation of a Call Committee that will interview the candidates.

This Season of Epiphany is fitting for you to enter this time of Transition. I know and trust that the light of Christ will shine through your process. The Holy Spirit will guide you as you prepare for your next called pastor. We will have a good year in mission together as we worship, serve, and learn. I celebrate the glittering light of this new dawn and the colorful sky of God's love and grace upon you this next year, knowing it will give you hope and encouragement.

Epiphany and Transition blessings,  
Pastor Elizabeth

## **Community Meal**

### **THIS SPUD'S FOR YOU!**



Loaded baked potatoes were on the menu at the January Community Meal. There were eight toppings available to choose from for the 101 people who came that night. Though a few of the toppings ran out before the night ended, we had plenty of potatoes, so no one left hungry.

Thank you to these 14 volunteers who made this meal possible: Donna, Pastor Elizabeth, Jean, Joanie, Judy E, Judy F, Kathy, Kevin, Larry, Linda, Marge, Marilee, Terry, and Wayne. The next meal is on Wednesday, February 12. If you plan to help, please use the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board or let me know.

John Enright

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## **"Soup-er" Bowl & Chili Cook-Off**

The weekend of the Super Bowl you will see two soup pans in the back of the church labeled with the two teams playing in the game. Vote with your dollars for the team that you hope will win. Money raised will be donated to Lutheran World Relief to fight world hunger.

Later that week the Annual Chili Cook-Off will be held on Thursday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, at 5:30pm. In addition to chili, there will be soups, breads, and desserts. There will be small cups available so you will be able to sample all the chili and soup. Once again, vote for your favorite with your dollars, and all donations will be combined with the Soup-er Bowl money and donated to Lutheran World Relief.

If you plan on bringing chili or soup it is EXTREMELY important that you sign up on the sheet on the bulletin board. We need to make sure that enough tables are set up and extension cords are available for crockpots.

John Enright

### **Virtual Offering**

We are Grateful for your Gifts toward our Mission of Serving Christ here at Zion, our community, and the world. You may scan this QR code for ease in giving through PayPal. Thank You for supporting God's mission!



## **Synod's Annual Congregational Resourcing Event**

You are invited to CRE on Saturday, March 22, 2025, at Sauk Valley Community College in Dixon, Illinois. This is an event for both rostered and lay persons, so all are welcome!

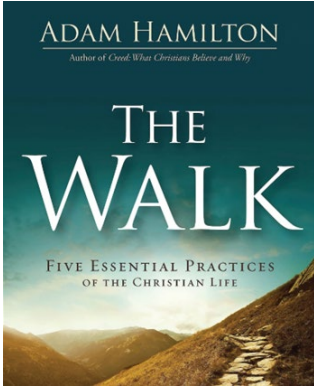
The theme for 2025 is Growing Disciples. We will be focusing on practices that we can do as individuals, congregations, and communities to grow in faith. The guest speakers are from ELCA Innovation. They will provide an engaging presentation titled, "Innovation Starts with Empathy." Together, we will explore how cultivating empathy can transform ministry and help leaders grow as disciples who make disciples. Following lunch you can choose to attend two different workshops.

Registration opens on January 10th and closes March 10th. Go to [NISYNOD.ORG](https://nissynod.org). The registration fee is \$35 for the event. This includes breakfast treats, coffee, and lunch. All registrations must be paid with a credit card. If this is not possible, please contact the Synod office at 309-794-4004. Registration opens at 8:30 a.m. and the day begins at 9:30 a.m. It ends at 3:45 p.m. or when you need to leave. This is a great day to meet new people and network around our synod.

### **Offering Information**

Zion is grateful for the generosity of all who give to support our ministries. For those of you who write checks and give cash, please use your envelopes or the ones in the pew so that we may give you credit and ensure the money goes where you intend. Zion is allowed from our bank several free transactions per month. After that number, we pay a fee for each additional transaction. Please use only one check for all your giving in a week. You can denote where it will be distributed on the front of the envelope. If you run out of lines, make a notation somewhere else on it. This gives us a paper trail of your intentions and lowers our fees. Thank you for your help!

## Lent Soup and Study



Lent is always a good time to reflect on our faith practices of worship, prayer, giving, serving, sharing, and learning.

Our Lent Learning this year will focus on our walk with Christ—how we daily follow him, grow in him, and faithfully serve him. In the Gospels, Jesus modeled for us the Christian spiritual life. The apostles taught it in their writings. And the Church has, through the last 2,000 years, sought to pursue this Christian spiritual life.

We will use material by Adam Hamilton, a pastor in the United Methodist Church. We will hear Hamilton speak in an engaging way through a DVD presentation, and Pastor Elizabeth will lead our discussion and reflections.

Before our study, we meet for a simple soup lunch at 11:30 a.m. Members of the group will offer to provide soup and more. Our sessions are:

March 11—Worship & Prayer

March 18—Study

March 25—Serving

April 1—Giving

April 8—Sharing

April 15—the Five Practices from the Cross

## Pioneer Club

**The Pioneer potluck will be on Monday, February 10 at noon. We will have Steve from the CLR Learning Center as our speaker. The chicken will be provided. Please bring a dish to share and your table settings.**

**Patti Lee**

## **Zion's 2025 Family Mission Trip**



**There will be a meeting on Thursday, January 30, 5pm-6pm at church.**

Families are welcome, but youth can attend without parents.

When: July 13 - 18

Where: Crandon Wisconsin - North of Stevens Point 282 miles (less than 4.5 hours from church.)

This mission trip is mostly relational through Adventures in Missions. We will work with Midwest Indian Missions and help with their summer camp. The week-long camp averages 50 children ages 8-13 from the Forest County Potawatomi and the Mole Lake Chippewa tribes. Our youth under 13 will participate in the camp while the adults and teenagers will assist with the camp counselors. Daily activities include games, crafts, music, and worship. Possible day trips to town for ice cream or swimming at the lake.

The teenagers and adults will work with the ministry host and the AIM Mission Leaders. (They do all the planning so we don't have to worry about that.)

Where do we sleep? Lodging is with a partner church in their camping cabins. (Bunk beds)

Who: Anyone ages 7 & up.

Dads are welcome too! People are needed to referee the games. It's not all arts and crafts.

How much: \$470 per person for the 6-day trip! This includes all food and activities. Any child 7-12 years old accompanied by a paying parent receives a 20% discount (\$376). This works for up to 2 children per family.

We have already started working on fundraising ideas to help with the cost. We need at least 15 people to attend. Please contact Jody Archer at 815-978-1691 if you are interested in attending.

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## Prayer Requests

The Freinds of Phyllis Cullison, The Family of Bishop Stacie Fidler, The Potter Family, Jason Lehman, The Hardt Family, The Stumpf Family, Bill Hathaway, Georgia Ruggles, Pastor Gary Erickson, Sam & Mazie Ruzic, Ardys Brockway, Dennis Flemming, Wanda Watts, Matthew Faust, Charles Lane, Gordon Rubeck, Cindy Smaha, Ron Nelson, Vicky Harley, Pat Huff, Bill Batterton, Wally Brown, Bob Kantner, Diane Vorndran, Guy and Pat Landmeier, Pat Melton, Frances Palmer, Felix Ring, Juan Castro Jr, Olivia Rubeck, Michelle Marks, Todd and Lois Graves, Marilyn Urban, Paula Crone, Helen Huftalin, Kendal Schmidt, Linda Johnson, Marcia Ellingburg, Dwaine Smith, Jim Johnson, Keira Kozlowski, The People of Ukraine, The People of Israel, The People living in Gaza, ALC Resurrection Church of India, Trinity Lutheran Church in Harvard.

In Service to our Nation:

John Kozlowski, Justin Kozlowski, Rob Zediker



# Happy Birthday from your Zion Family!



2-Dale Temple	5-Gavin Sipe	16-Donna Brookbank	19-Pat Scherf	22-Eric Gifford	27-John Enright
3-Michelle Ernest	10-Henry Minson	18-Sandra Gustafson	20-Karen Ballweg	23-Lyle Lee	28-Michelle Kottman
4-Sloane Ortiz	15-Max Beever	19-Todd Graves	22-Robert Kozlowski	24-Julie Pinkston	

## From the Treasurer:

### General Fund

12/2024 Beginning Balance \$ 6,610.76  
 Total Income \$ 19,443.70  
 Total Expense \$ 20,238.97  
 Balance \$ 5,815.49

### Building Fund

12/2024 Beginning Balance \$ 17,042.48  
 Total Income \$ 3,460.00  
 Total Expense \$ 6,749.44  
 Balance \$ 13,753.04

### General Fund Reserve Savings

Dec/2024 Beginning Balance \$ 89,852.51  
 Income \$ 19.69  
 Expenses \$ 0.00  
 Balance \$ 89,872.20

### Staff

Rev. Elizabeth Martin  
 Intentional Interim Pastor

Mandy Minson  
 Administrative Assistant

David Schumann  
 Council President

Dan Albrecht  
 Choir Director

Pat Castro  
 Sunday School Director

Diane Vorndran  
 Financial Secretary

Sharon Yunto  
 Treasurer

### Worship Schedule

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

Find Worship Videos at  
[www.zionbelvidere.com](http://www.zionbelvidere.com)

OR

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

Email  
[zionlutheran1300@gmail.com](mailto:zionlutheran1300@gmail.com)

### Council Members

#### **Term Through January 2026**

Gretel Barid  
 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

### Texts for the Month of February

#### February 2

*Malachi 3:1-4*

*Hebrews 2:14-18*

*Luke 2:22-40*

#### February 9

*Isaiah 6:1-13*

*1 Corinthians 15:1-11*

*Luke 5:1-11*

#### February 16

*Jeremiah 17:5-10*

*1 Corinthians 15:12-20*

*Luke 6:17-26*

#### February 23

*Genesis 45:3-11, 15*

*1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50*

*Luke 6:17-38*

## February 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
OFFICE HOURS Monday-Thursday 9am-1pm Closed Fridays						1
2 Sunday Worship 9am & Sunday School  Confirmation Class 10:20am	3 Worship & Music 5pm Shiloh 6pm	4	5 Sewing/Quilting 9am Bible Study 9:30am	6 Choir 5pm/Bells 6pm  7:00 pm – Worship  AED Demo	7 Office Closed	8
9 Sunday Worship 9am & Sunday School Minson Baptism  Altar Guild Meeting 10:30am	10 Pioneer Lunch 12:00pm  Witness 6pm	11	12 Council Reports Due by 9am Sewing/Quilting 9am Bible Study 9:30am Baby Bank 4pm-6pm Community Meal 5pm-6pm	13 Choir 5pm/Bells 6pm Chili Cook-Off 5:30pm  7:00 pm –Worship	14 Office Closed  4-H Setup	15 4-H Super Saturday
16 Sunday Worship 9am & Sunday School  Confirmation Class 10:20am	17 Meals on Wheels 11am	18 Meals on Wheels 11am	19 Meals on Wheels 11am  Sewing/Quilting 9am Bible Study 9:30am  Council Meeting 6:00pm	20 Meals on Wheels 11am  Choir 5pm/Bells 6pm  7:00 pm – Worship	21 Meals on Wheels 11am  Office Closed	22
23 Sunday Worship 9am & Sunday School	24 Tidings Articles Due by 9am	25	26 Sewing/Quilting 9am Bible Study 9:30am	27 Choir 5pm/Bells 6pm Barnabas 6pm  7:00 pm – Holden Sundae Worship	28 Office Closed	