

## *January 2024*



## *Zion Lutheran Church*

**Sunday, January 7**

Baptism of Our Lord/Communion

**Sunday, January 14**

Second Sunday after Epiphany/Communion

**Sunday, January 21**

Third Sunday after Epiphany/Communion

**Sunday, January 28**

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany/Communion

## *Pastor's Corner*



Dear Friends in Christ,

Here we go again with the New Year's resolutions. Television and internet ads are teeming with the newest ways to lose weight, get stronger, become more manly, make more money, look younger... the list goes on and on. The message we receive is that we are not enough—not thin enough or strong enough or manly enough or wealthy enough or young enough. The advertising then goes on to tell us that this particular company has exactly what we need to make us enough...until the next time they tell us that we aren't enough. The lives we live in this country are fraught with the message that we are not enough, and to be honest, we aren't.

We are not kind enough, compassionate enough, humble enough, generous enough, quiet enough, or even filled with enough faith. What, then, are we to do?

In a word? Trust.

Poet Jay Hulme said, "Christ forgives the past, holds the present, and opens the way to the future." Trust that. We've all behaved in ways that are less than Christ-like; Christ forgives our past misdeeds and errors—even those knowingly committed by us. We all know that we are not Christ-like enough; Christ holds us in our present state and loves us still. We all would like to do better; Christ opens the way to a future filled with new possibilities and opportunities to live in a way that honors him by honoring all who share this planet with us.

We are not enough, but we are held by the only One who can make us enough. There is no gimmick, no pill, no financial scheme, no gym...

only prayer that the Holy Spirit will open our hearts to be changed and that we will be given the power to trust that Christ fulfills what we cannot.

*Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls...” -Acts 2:37-42 [NRSV]*



### Council Corner

**Annual Meeting January 28, 2024  
following 9 am worship.**

## **Website**

Look us up online at [zionstratford.org](http://zionstratford.org). Zion’s website is full of information at your fingertips. Weekly sermons you can listen to with a link to the scriptures of the week and attached bulletin. The events calendar can be used as a quick reference for events here at Zion. The monthly newsletter and council minutes are also available each month. The church office is taking care of loading the information, so please be patient as this is new to the office. Hope you enjoy the website of Zion Lutheran Church.

## **Operation Christmas**

Sweet Dreamz has been selected as our outreach recipient for Zion's Operation Christmas gift-giving this year. Sweet Dreamz is a non-profit organization located in Spencer Wisconsin that provides comfort items to children ages newborn to 17 years who come from a home



of substance abuse as they make their way into foster care – things these children cannot take with them during this very hard transition. When a child is removed from a home, they are not allowed to take anything with them because it is contaminated.

Sweet Dreamz serves 45 counties throughout WI including Marathon and Wood. Sweet Dreamz provides these things to give them hope for a brighter future. Each child receives a homemade pillowcase filled with a blanket, a stuffed animal, pajamas, and a book – all specific to their age and size. Thank you for your generosity and continued support of Zion's Operation Christmas!

## ***The Chosen***

### **The Chosen Begins Again January 14!**

If you're interested in binge-watching a few episodes of The Chosen, be sure to join us at 5:30 pm on

Sunday, January 14. Bring a bible if you like, some snacks to share, a snuggly blanket, and something to drink.

We're at the beginning of season 2, but we'll be happy to help you catch up. You can also google "The Chosen" to watch season 1 for free.

# *Live Nativity*

On December 2, Zion presented the Live Nativity during the Christmas in the Park event. Thank you to all who came out to share the meaning of Christmas with the community.



# January's Faith Journey

## ***Tuesday morning Bible Study***

Bible study will be each Tuesday morning. We invite anyone interested in exploring the scriptures and a time of fellowship to join us on Tuesday mornings at 10 a.m.

### **Tuesday Morning Bible Study Schedule 2023-2024 (10 am)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic &amp; Scripture Notes</b>
<i>January 2, 2024</i>	<i>No Bible Study</i>
<i>January 9, 2024</i>	<i>The Word John 1:1-18</i>
<i>January 16, 2024</i>	<i>Annunciation and Magnificat Luke 1:26-56</i>
<i>January 23, 2024</i>	<i>Jesus' Birth Comparison Luke 2:1-20, Matthew 1:18-2:23</i>
<i>January 30, 2024</i>	<i>John the Baptist Matthew 3</i>

## **Homebound Visits**



Several members of Zion are homebound. This makes it difficult for them to come to church and receive communion. Pastor Amy makes frequent visits to these members and encourages other members of Zion to visit their fellow members and serve communion. Pastor Amy will walk you through how to serve home

communion. Consider taking a few hours a month to visit with a fellow member and brighten their day.

## ***Christian Youth Education Programs.***

***Continue to pray for all the children and leaders as they begin a new year of their faith journey.***

**Little Lutherans/J-Team**

**January 10, 2024**

*John The Baptist*

**January 24, 2024**

*Jesus Miracles: Feed the Multitude/Jesus Heals*

Little Lutherans and J-Team (K-6th grade) will be focusing on the Bible this year with games, crafts, and Bible stories. These faith formation classes will be held every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month from **3:15-5:15 p.m.**

Children may arrive anytime between 3:15 and 3:50 pm, for those coming from a non-Stratford school district. Information and calendar can be found at: <https://zionstratford.org/faith-formation/k-6th-grade/>

## ***Confirmation***

### ***CORE Class***

*January 10, 2024 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm*

*New Testament*

*Life of Jesus / Gospel Comparison*

### ***Elective Class***

*January 24, 2024 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm*

*Teach Us to Pray*

**Class runs from 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.** Confirmation students are required to participate in all CORE classes. Elective classes are selected by the student. Sermon notes and activity verification are required throughout the year and should be returned to the office or dropped in the basket in the narthex or on the information table in the lobby. Confirmation registration forms, class schedules, and more information available at:

<https://zionstratford.org/faith-formation/7th-9th-grade/>.

### ***Disciples For Christ***

**Sunday, January 21, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.**

*Fruits of the Spirit*

*Book: Living in the Spirit Pages 25-28.*

The schedule and more information can be found at:

<https://zionstratford.org/faith-formation10th-12th-grade/>.

## ***Supporting Ministries***



### ***Simply Giving***

Your congregation works hard to support your faith journey, respond to your pastoral needs, and plan for educational and worship opportunities all year long.

Make it easy for yourself (and for us) by signing up for Simply Giving.

Through Simply Giving, you can “set it and forget it” when it comes to donating to Zion’s ministry. Your donation will automatically come out of your account in whatever amount and on whatever schedule is best for you.

Forms are available just outside the worship space and can be completed and returned to the office. Or just give Kathy a quick call in the office and she will be happy to help you out.



## ***Treasurer's Report***

To keep everyone informed of the financial status of Zion Lutheran, we include a monthly Treasurer's Report in the newsletter. The overall purpose is to be transparent about how Zion is building a culture of generosity and being good stewards (managers) of God's gracious provision to fuel Jesus' ministry.

January 1, 2023 through November 30, 2023:

- General Offering Received \$151,351.80
- Ministry Expenses (salaries, utilities, supplies, etc.) \$198,525.97
- **Giving vs. Expense Deficit** **\$ 47,174.17**
- Undesignated Cash Balance (11/30/23) \$ -\$9,814.70

(The undesignated cash balance is in the negative since our actual income has not been matching our expenses. We are currently operating in the red).

**Note: Our ministry teams are well below their budget expenses through this part of the year.**

Benevolence Goals through November 30, 2023: (These are additional goals, not included in annual budget.)

Crossways Camping Ministries	\$ 100.00	3.6% of goal
Lutheran Social Services	\$ 850.00	47.2% of goal
Missionary	\$ 1,738.00	49.7% of goal
ELCA World Hunger Appeal	\$ 3,210.00	98.8% of goal

Thank you to everyone who continues to support Zion's ministry in Jesus' name with financial gifts. It takes all of us together to fuel our ministry plan.

***Building Update 2024***

Total monthly principal payments	\$ 8,606.96
Total monthly interest payments	<u>\$ 693.04</u>
Balance of loan as of <b>11/17/2023</b>	\$ 71,627.38

Partners Bank

Building checking acct. balance as of **12/04/2023** \$5,517.06

Payment Bi-Weekly	Start Balance	Payment Amount	Interest Paid	Principal Paid	Ending Balance
09/08 & 09/22	\$80,234.34	\$3,100.00	\$239.65	\$2,860.35	\$77,373.99
10/06 & 10/20	\$77,373.99	\$3,100.00	\$231.02	\$2,868.98	\$74,505.01
11/03 & 11/17	\$74,505.01	\$3,100.00	\$222.37	\$2,877.63	\$71,627.38

**Thank you to all who continue to give generously toward the Debt Reduction (Building) Fund.**

***Communion Stewards***

The Communion stewardship team is looking for 1 volunteer for the communion set up and clean up. The obligation would be 8 times a year. Set up and clean up take approximately 30 minutes. If you would be interested in joining this committee, please contact Rhonda Thompson or the church office at [office@zionstratford.org](mailto:office@zionstratford.org) or at 715-687-4110.



### ***Positions Open on Church Council***

If you've ever had a suggestion, a complaint, or an idea about how our congregation should or could run, now is the time to throw your

hat in the ring for church council! We have three council openings coming up for 2024, and we need you!

Meetings are held the third Monday of (almost) each month, and generally last 1 to 1 ½ hours. There is prayer and scripture study, receiving of reports, discussion of any congregational issues, and a whole lot of laughter. Please prayerfully consider whether the Holy Spirit is calling you to fill one of these openings in the coming year.

If you have questions or want to find out more (with no obligation other than to pray about it), talk to any current council member or Pastor Amy.

### **Evangelism**

The Evangelism team would like to send cards to individuals or families who are hospitalized or have experienced a loss in their family. If you have someone that you wish for the church to reach out to you can contact the church office at 715-687-4110 or at [office@zionstratford.org](mailto:office@zionstratford.org).

## ***Fellowship***

Join us each Sunday following worship for coffee, tea, and hot cocoa fellowship. It is a wonderful time to catch up with friends, family, and other members of your congregation. Often, there are tasty treats to



enjoy as well. Consider hosting a fellowship for your fellow members, it is as easy as signing up.



If you have never hosted a fellowship, no worries! Several people are willing to help you out with making coffee and setting up. Let the office know and those arrangements will be made.

## **Choir Rehearsal 8:00 a.m.**

In the Balcony - January 7, 14

No rehearsal on January 21

In the Balcony January 28



## **Christ in Our Home**

The devotional *Christ in Our Home* for January, February, and March is now available in the Narthex or the information table in the church lobby.



## **Scrip Shopping Supports Ministry**

Scrip is available year round! Each order supports Faith Formation Youth Programs such as Camp Scholarships and National Gatherings.

Thousands of gift card options are available! Some of them in stock, always available for pick up and others that need to be ordered. In an effort to make our orders as profitable as possible, we will be placing special orders on the 10th of every month. Log into the Raise Right app to place your order or contact Kathy in the church office and ask for information on Scrip. She will provide you with a phone number. This phone number can be used to call or text in your order. Once your order has arrived, you will be contacted with details on how to pick up and pay for your order! Simple as that!

Many vendors offer e-cards as well! E-cards are sent via e-mail and can be ordered anytime! No waiting! Simply place your order on the Raise Right app and contact Janet or Wendy to send the order. The e-card will arrive in minutes!

Thank you to all who supported the scrip program the past few months. Congratulations to the winner of the Scrip Holiday Bonus! Brandon Aschenbrenner will have his choice of any \$25.00 gift card.

## **Worship Duty Signup via Signup Genius**

Please take a moment to sign up to participate in our worship service as an usher, reader, acolyte, media, communion assistant

(server), or assisting minister. The fall signups are now available. Sign up by January 17 for February 2024.

Here is the link for January:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0844A5A92B0-46263829-january>

Here is the link for February: [February 2024 Zion Lutheran Church Stratford: February 2024 \(signupgenius.com\)](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0844A5A92B0-46263829-february)

## **Stratford Food Pantry Drive**

Stratford Food Pantry would like to extend a thank you to individuals who have generously given to the Food Pantry during the summer months. There continues to be a need in the Stratford community for support from the Food Pantry. Please prayerfully consider donating supplies to the Food Pantry. You can drop off donations in the lobby of the church or in the Narthex here at Zion.

The Stratford Area Food Pantry provides food to individuals and families within the Stratford School District. If you are in need of food, we are here for you! Hours are Tuesday mornings from 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. and Wednesday evenings from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. or by appointment. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Dan Wieland at [wieland.dandeb@gmail.com](mailto:wieland.dandeb@gmail.com) or at 715-506-0020 and he will help you get connected.

## Council Minutes

Council minutes are available on the church website at [zionstratford.org/publications](https://zionstratford.org/publications). You can also get a copy of the minutes by contacting Kathy in the church office or on the Information table by the church office.

## Prayer Requests

Did you know that you can submit your prayer requests on the ZionStratford.org website? You can also let people know that people are praying for them too. Check it out at <https://zionstratford.org/prayer>



## Sermons by Phone or Podcast App

Audio recordings of Sunday sermons are now available by calling **848.204.2721**. You can also find it on the podcast apps *PodBean* and *Bullhorn* under the podcast name "Open Doors Open Hearts Open Hands." You can also find a recording and a copy of the bulletin at <https://zionstratford.org/publications/>.

Zion Lutheran Church  
213501 Legacy Street  
Stratford, WI 54484-5908  
**[www.zionstratford.org](http://www.zionstratford.org)**

**We're on the web!**

Phone: 715-687-4110  
Fax: 715-687-3541  
Email: [office@zionstratford.org](mailto:office@zionstratford.org)

Return Service Requested



# January 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 <i>No Bible Study 6pm Worship Team Meeting</i>	3	4	5	6
7 <i>9am Worship/ Communion</i>	8 <i>6pm Executive Team Meeting</i>	9 <i>10am Bible Study 7pm Faith Formation Team Meeting</i>	10 <i>3:15pm JTeam/Little Lutherans 6pm Confirmation CORE class</i>	11	12	13
14 <i>9am Worship/ Communion 5:30pm The Chosen</i>	15 <i>6pm Council Meeting</i>	16 <i>10am Bible Study</i>	17	18	19	20
21 <i>9am Worship/ Communion 5:30 pm Disciples for Christ</i>	22	23 <i>10am Bible Study 6pm Evangelism Team Meeting</i>	24 <i>3:15pm JTeam/Little Lutherans 6pm Confirmation Elective class</i>	25	26	27
28 <i>9am Worship/ Communion Annual Meeting</i>	29	30 <i>10am Bible Study</i>	31			

Date	01/07/2024 Baptism of our Lord 9:00 AM	01/14/2024 2nd Sunday of Epiphany 9:00 AM	01/21/2024 3rd Sunday of Epiphany 9:00 AM	01/28/2024 4th Sunday of Epiphany 9:00 AM	02/04/2024 5th Sunday of Epiphany 9:00 AM
Assisting Minister	Darla Leick	Riley Spindler	Dan Thompson	Carmella Moon	Dan Wieland
Reader	Darla Leick	Riley Spindler	Dan Thompson	Carmella Moon	Dan Wieland
Acolytes	Ryleigh & Emmercyn Schiller	Ella Schultz Reid Spindler	Cooper & Brynn Wiesman	Sierra Kreft Eleanor Smazal	Abby Ballerstein Ruby Casperson
Ushers	Ryan & Amy Cournoyer	Phil & Kerri Schultz	Cory & Jim Wiesman	Eddy & Ann Peterson	Rhonda Knoll Sharla Dreikosen
Communion Assistants	Darla & Brian Leick Tadd Schoenherr	Riley Spindler Angie Guralski June Krueger	Dan & Rhonda Thompson Brenda Castellano	Carmella Moon Angile Guralski Nancy Schoenherr	Dan & Deb Wieland Lois Miller
Basket Holder	Ellie & Turner Southwick	.....	Jordy Spindler Harvey Waddell	.....	Averi & Mila Johnson
Communion Steward	Patti Casperson	Rhonda Thompson	Wendy Spaeth	Lindsay White	Deb Wieland
Fellowship	Volunteer	Schoenherr Family	Volunteer	Volunteer	Volunteer
Host	Faith Formation Ray White	FF Youth Casey Dasler	President Dan Thompson	Secretary Carmella Moon	Vice President Maryel Schoenfuss
Bell Ringer	Ryan Cournoyer	Phillip Schultz	Jim Wiesman	Eddy Peterson	Kevin Miller
Media	Kevin Miller	Ted Dasler	Marge Kollmansberger	Connor Kreft	Kevin Miller