

Zion Lutheran Church
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Stratford, WI 54484-5908
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www.zionstratford.org

Open doors, open hearts, open hands

January 2025
Zion Lutheran Church



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sundays at 9:00 am

Sunday, January 5 - Epiphany

Stories of the Christmas Carols / No Communion

Sunday, January 12

First Sunday after Epiphany / Holy Communion

Sunday, January 19

Second Sunday after Epiphany / Holy Communion

Sunday, January 26

Third Sunday after Epiphany / Holy Communion
Annual Meeting



JOIN US IN PERSON OR ONLINE!

Website zionstratford.org

Look us up online at zionstratford.org. Zion's website is full of information at your fingertips. You can listen to weekly sermons and follow a link to the scriptures of the week and the weekly 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, either online or by contacting the church office.

Sermons by Phone or Podcast App

Audio records 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/worship>.

Facebook Worship

On many Sundays, you can also catch the entire worship live on our Facebook page at 9 am. We are still experimenting with this option, so we are unable to guarantee this service at this time. Please give us a try on those weekends you are out of town or stuck at home! The goal will be to provide the service/sermon in one format based on usage. If you are a regular listener of the audio sermon, please contact the church office to let us know that you have a preference for accessing remotely for church services.

Monthly Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for the February newsletter is January 15. To submit an article about an upcoming ministry opportunity, please email the church office at office@zionstratford.org. Thank you.

Annual Congregational Meeting

Zion's Annual meeting will be held following worship on Sunday, January 26, 2025. At this meeting, we will receive the reports of the church and make decisions on our ministry and our budget for the upcoming year.

All baptized and confirmed active members of the congregation are encouraged to attend and cast votes. Active members are those who have communed and tithed in the past fiscal year.



BENEVOLENCE

Simply Giving/Vanco

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 complete 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, 2024 through December 31, 2024:	
General Offering Received	\$198,859.57
Ministry Expenses (salaries, utilities, supplies, etc.)	\$200,781.88
Giving vs. Expense Deficit	\$ -1,781.88
Undesignated Cash Balance	\$ 4,030.53

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.



WORSHIP

Our communion bread is homemade and contains honey and gluten. **Gluten** and **honey free** servings are in a basket as you approach the communion station. Please take on as needed to serve yourself during the blessing.



EVANGELISM

Live Nativity



Scrip Cards Make Great Valentine's Gifts!

RaiseRight is the answer for quick, easy gift card giving and use! Proceeds support Zion youth programs and our Faith Formation Team! Each card purchase returns a percentage to support Zion Faith Formation youth programs such as camp scholarships, regional and national youth gatherings and more!

- ◆ It's easy! You can download the RAISE RIGHT app and shop right from your couch.
- ◆ Contact Janet Schoenherr at 715-650-0097 or Wendy Spaeth at 715-615-2500 or the church office for the code, and for assistance with the app.

[Visit www.raiseright.com](http://www.raiseright.com)

Thank you for continuing to support Zion youth!



PASTOR'S CORNER

Dear Friends in Christ,

I am so sick and tired of having to rely on others for help.

This was brought home to me recently when my husband and I took a few days of vacation together in Milwaukee. Everywhere we went, he was dropping me off or picking me up at the door, transporting and storing my crutches everywhere we went, toting our bags in and out of the hotel and the car, carrying plates and cups at the breakfast buffet... well, you get the picture.

Others would patiently wait as I made my slow way through a door, or offer encouraging words as I struggled with a basic activity.

So, one morning when I was trying to manage my breakfast and find a place to sit, a very kind gentleman came up to me and offered to carry my things to my seat. As usual, I apologized for being a bother, and he very calmly stopped, turned toward me and said quite matter-of-factly, "I have no doubt you would do exactly the same thing for me if our roles were reversed."

That struck a nerve, because he was absolutely right. I would have thought nothing of helping someone who was struggling, and it would have been a bright spot in my day to be of assistance to someone else. That was when I realized that, although I need a lot of help right now, it's not about me at all. It's about how we live out God's love *together*—with, for, and on behalf of one another.

It is humbling to have to rely on other people for things which I feel I should be able to do on my own... frustrating to wait while others care for me... embarrassing to always be the one others have to wait for and prepare for and watch out for. I also know that we all need to be needed; we need to—and expect to—help others out of simple human kindness, compassion, and dignity.

Thank you for all you have done to make my limitations just one of the many ways in which you express God's love for all.

In Christ's service,
Pastor Amy

So then whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all and especially for those of the family of faith. -Galatians 6:10 [NRSVUE]



FAITH FORMATION

Christmas Pageant



EVANGELISM

Hospitalizations and Prayer Requests

Please remember that hospitals and other care facilities are prohibited by law from sharing your information with non-authorized persons. This includes your congregation and pastor!

If you are experiencing challenges in life and would like a visit from your church family, please contact the church office at 715-687-41210. Your information will be shared confidentially with Pastor Amy and with our prayer team if you wish.

Our prayer team consists of disciples who pray for all prayer requests the church receives. If you would be interested in becoming a disciple in prayer, please contact the church office and you will be added to the group. Group members receive all prayer requests by email.

Hats, Hats, Hats!

There are still some beautiful hats (handmade by one of our members) available in the fellowship area. They are free for the taking, and lots of color combinations are available.

The hats are free, but if you'd like to offer something in payment, please make a separate donation to another ministry of the church: some ideas include the memorial fund, the Germanfest crisis fund, camp scholarships, the music fund, and many more,

They're soft and warm, and you'll look awesome wearing one!

Picture Directory

The dreaded picture directory returns to Zion in Spring of 2025!

Actually, this picture directory will be a bit easier than past directories, as we will be able to take the pictures ourselves and update in real time. New baby? No problem! Just got married? No problem. New member? No problem!

Watch for more information as we get closer to beginning this process.



EVANGELISM

Updating Membership Information

Zion is continuing to update the membership information and needs your help. To remain an active member in good standing, you need to complete a Membership Contact Information form if you haven't done so already. A fillable PDF form is available on the homepage of the church website at <https://zionstratford.org>. A hard copy is available from the office or in the Narthex. Thank you.

Homebound Ministry Opportunity

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 can walk you through how to serve home communion. Consider ministry to the homebound by taking an hour or two per month to visit with a fellow member and brighten their day. Or perhaps you'd like to visit on special occasions such as Christmas or Easter, bringing a small gift along with you visit.

Please talk to any member of the Evangelism Committee (led by Dan Thompson) with any ideas you may have to brighten someone's day.

Thank You

... to everyone who worked so diligently to plan, clean, coordinate, organize, prepare, decorate, contribute for Poinsettias and the Christmas tree, the treat bags, the Advent Services, the Children's Christmas Program, the Christmas Eve worship services and special music.

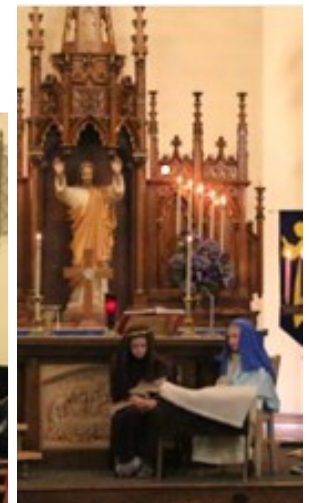
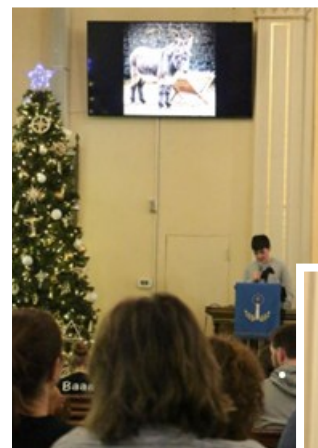
... to everyone who provided fellowship throughout the year, for help with newsletters and other mailings, for maintaining our property, for our leaders, for our Sunday servers, and everyone who participates to the success of Zion.

**We wish you all a very Happy, Healthy
and Blessed New Year!**



WORSHIP

Christmas Eve Worship





WORSHIP

Bell Choir

Looking for a way to use your musical talents? Interested in participating in the Zion Bell Choir? If you want to participate in the bell choir, contact Paul Untiet by phone or text 715-615-942 to receive communications updates. ***Rehearsals Sunday mornings @10:15 am*** (refer to the enclosed calendar for rehearsal dates).

Stoney River Assisted Living

Pastor Amy leads a short worship service monthly at Stoney River Assisted Living in Marshfield. This worship service with Holy Communion will be held the fourth Thursday of each month at 1 p. Please feel free to join Pastor Amy as we worship and visit together with members we don't get to see very often. Stoney River is located at 1204 West McMillan Street in Marshfield.

Serving in Worship Substitutions

On vacation? At a sporting event? Family wedding? If you are scheduled to serve in worship as an assisting minister, acolyte, communion server, reader, usher, etc. and are unable to serve on that date, please look at the calendar and contact another person to switch with you. If you need a list of people to contact, please reach out to Brenda Huther at hutherbk@yahoo.com or at 715-581-2485. Thank you.

Choir

All are welcome to share their talents in song, or musical instruments in praise of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. If you need any additional information, please contact Mary Wussow by phone at 715-897-4538 or email at gmkjmwus@gmail.com. Sunday morning rehearsals begin at 8:00 am in the balcony. Please refer to the enclosed monthly calendar for Choir rehearsal dates.

Christ in Our Home

The devotional Christ in Our Home for January, February and March is now available in the Narthex or on the information table near the church office. The church provides this devotional for anyone who would like to take a few minutes each day reflecting on God's word.



EVANGELISM

Stratford Food Pantry

The Stratford Food Pantry Board wishes to thank everyone for their generous donations of money and non-perishable food items. Your generosity keeps the shelves stocked, allowing us to help our neighbors in need. Your giving is greatly appreciated! We wish you all the best in the new year.

The Stratford Area Food Pantry, located in our facility, provides food to individuals and families within the Stratford School District. If you are in need of food, we'd love to help you out! We're open Tuesday mornings from 9:00-11:00 a.m.; Wednesday evenings from 5:00-7:00 p.m.; or by appointment.

Donations may be dropped off on Tuesday mornings and Wednesday evenings. The Stratford Area Food Pantry is supported by individuals, local churches, groups and businesses; and is staffed by volunteers.

Card Ministry

The Evangelism team is sending cards to individuals or families who are hospitalized or have experienced a loss in their family. If you know someone who might enjoy receiving a card, contact the church office at 715-687-4110 or office@zionstratford.org.

Sunday 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.



WITH SYMPATHY

Our deepest sympathy goes out to the family of Sarah Schuette whose mother, Janice, recently passed away on December 26.