



Zion St. John

LUTHERAN CHURCH

Being the Body of Christ

December 2024

Vol. 30 No. 12

Advent/ Christmas

... and you shall call his name

Jesus

for he will save his people from their sins.

Matthew 1:21, ESV



OUR VISION STATEMENT

At Zion St. John Lutheran Church, we are committed to being the body of Christ until He returns. Led by the Holy Spirit and gathered around God's Word and Sacraments, we join in worship, fellowship, learning, spiritual nurture, outreach, and service, as we grow in faith and invite others to experience Christ's presence.



The angel said to the shepherds, "Do not be afraid; for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people; to you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord." Luke 2:10-11

Martin Luther called John 3:16 "the Gospel in a nutshell." To me, these two verses from Luke's Gospel are Christmas in a nutshell. How I view Christmas has changed over the years. When I was a kid, I remember going shopping in Waterloo with my mother. I remember her picking out the perfect flocked Christmas tree from Rainbow florists. She spent hours decorating that tree. People knocked on our door to come in and see that tree and the packages that were under it that Mom had spent hours decorating. I remember participating in the church Christmas program and the wonderful bag of goodies we would get that contained peanuts, ribbon candy and a piece of fruit. I knew that at Christmas we celebrated the birth of Jesus, but to me, at that age, I was more interested in presents than celebrating the presence of God in the flesh on earth.

As I have grown older what I value at Christmas has changed. I now am just as excited to see someone open a present from me as I am to open a gift from someone else. My two trips to the Holy Land and to the Church of the Nativity have helped me to put the focus in its proper place, to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. It is a joy to celebrate Christmas here at Zion St. John. The sanctuary is always beautiful and adds to my joy. To see the children tell the story of Jesus birth at the Christmas program (December 15th at 4 pm). To see the excitement of the kids at the 5:00 pm Christmas Eve service and to hear the beautiful music at the 10:00 pm service. The church where I grew up didn't have Christmas Day services, but both of my calls have been to churches that have this tradition. I have grown to appreciate these services pondering the mystery of the Word made flesh. God's greatest gift of love for you and for me.

May you experience the joy, wonder, and the true meaning of Christmas this year, and every year.

God's Blessings to You,
Pastor Kim





Merry Christmas! December is already here and the holidays are in full swing. For most people this is the best time of year with all the wonderful Hallmark movies

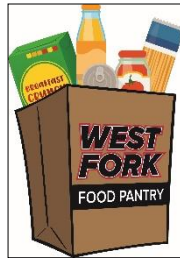
playing, I know that's something I enjoy. My family does Christmas a little differently, we open our presents on Christmas Eve. Also, this year as something different we are teaming up with the Retz family and the Tauro family to spread some Christmas cheer in the form of caroling. If anybody would like us to stop by and sing along please reach out to me. Whether your family creates new traditions or continues with traditions passed down, I hope you and family have a blessed and beautiful Christmas.



Merry Christmas and God Bless,
Leah C

**Thursdays,
Dec 5, 12, 19 & 26
2-5 pm**

**Saturday, Dec 7
10 am-noon**



We continue to see increasing numbers of families large and small at the pantry. If you can help, we are very appreciative for all donations of money, personal hygiene items, perishable and non-perishable food items. We are especially in need of personal care items, peanut butter, pasta sauce and soup. You can place items in the cart in the Narthex or in the drop box on the front of the pantry building @ 106 Gilman. We will be distributing Christmas meal bags with hams or turkeys on Thursday December 19.

ADVENT EVENTS

1. Free Advent devotional books and Advent calendars will be available in the narthex starting November 24.
2. Midweek Advent worship will be on Wednesday, December 4 11 and 18 @ 7 pm. The Holden Evening Prayer Service is a beautiful candlelight service that brings peace during a very busy time of the year! Come and find the true meaning of Christmas!
3. Participate in the Reverse Advent Calendar for the West Fork Food Pantry. Each day add an item to a box and then bring it to the Food Pantry in December or January and help us fill the shelves! Here are some suggestions or create your own!



- Dec 1 cereal
- Dec 2 peanut butter
- Dec 3 baked beans
- Dec 4 boxed potatoes
- Dec 5 mac and cheese
- Dec 6 canned fruit
- Dec 7 canned tomatoes
- Dec 8 canned tuna or chicken
- Dec 9 cake or brownie mix
- Dec 10 canned applesauce
- Dec 11 canned sweet potatoes
- Dec 12 juice
- Dec 13 jelly
- Dec 14 crackers
- Dec 15 rice
- Dec 16 ketchup, mustard, pickles
- Dec 17 packaged pasta
- Dec 18 spaghetti sauce
- Dec 19 chicken noodle soup
- Dec 20 tomato soup
- Dec 21 canned corn
- Dec 22 canned peas
- Dec 23 canned carrots
- Dec 24 canned green beans



FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Here is a look at our finances as of October 31, 2024:

Budgeted Income	\$186,225
Offerings Received	\$155,873
Current Deficit	\$ 30, 352
Total Expenses	\$168,485
Checking Balance	\$ 4,446



The good news is that our budget deficit only grew by \$1,300 and our checking account balance only dropped by just over \$1,000! Please prayerfully fill out and turn in a pledge card for 2025 if you have not already done so. The council is working hard on the budget for 2025. Our insurance company informed us that if we want to renew our policy with them, our rate would jump from \$9,000 to \$35,300. That is not a misprint. The council is working hard to get quotes from other insurance companies and we are working with our current company to find a more reasonable rate. Please pray that God will guide us in this endeavor.

As the end of the year draws near, please prayerfully consider giving on or before December 31, 2024 so your giving can be used as a tax deduction.

ELCA GOOD GIFTS TREE



The Christmas tree in the narthex contains ornaments from ELCA Good Gifts. If you are looking for a way to give a gift twice, this is a great idea. Not only can you give a gift to the one you love, but also share the gift of an animal with a family in need somewhere around the world! Just take an ornament and follow the directions to order on line, or if you need assistance, talk with Diane in the office.

OFFICE CLOSED DEC 25-26



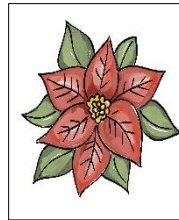
MIDWEEK WORSHIP



Midweek Advent worship will be on Wednesday, December 4, 11 & 18 @ 7 pm. The Holden Evening Prayer Service is a beautiful candlelight service that brings peace during a very busy time of the year! Come and find the true meaning of Christmas!

KLMJ BROADCAST

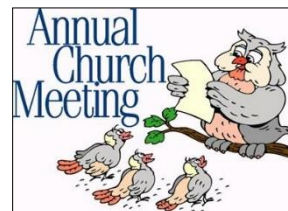
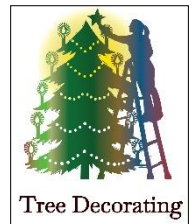
Our 10 pm Christmas Eve worship will be broadcast on KLMJ radio @ 9 am on Christmas Day. Thank you to a very generous anonymous donor for this special gift!



Thank you to all who provided poinsettias for this Advent and Christmas season! You may pick up your flowers any time after Christmas Day.

TREE DECORATING

Saturday Nov 30, we invite all to help with the decorating of the sanctuary for the Advent season. This will include decorating the tree and the sanctuary and is a fun morning for all ages. We will begin the decorating @ 9 am.



**MARK YOUR CALENDARS ZSJ
ANNUAL MEETING JAN. 19 2025,
10 AM
(SNOW DATE JAN. 26)
REPORTS DUE JAN. 7!**

Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Rebekah Circle
Mon, Dec 9 @ 6 pm
Recording
Available by 10 am
Tues, Dec 10

HOLIDAY FOOD FAIR



It is already November and time to start thinking about the holidays. At ZSJ's, it is time to start planning for the Holiday Food Fair. Again this year we will have cookies, candy, jar mixes, snack mixes, and a few surprises. There will also be Fair Trade items and Rada cutlery.

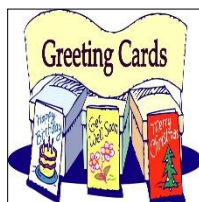
The Fair will again be on the Sunday of the children's Christmas program, Dec. 15th. The fair will take place during fellowship hour after church and also after the children's program in the evening. There will be cinnamon rolls and coffee during fellowship.

The cookies are sold by the dozen and everything else is priced individually. Everyone is invited to participate whether it be making and donating items, shopping, joining fellowship or volunteering to help.

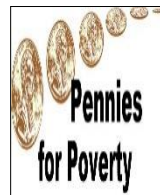
More information will be coming in the bulletins each week. If you have questions or would like to help in any way, please contact Carla N, 641 892-4985.

BOXED CARDS

The Women of ZSJ have boxed and individual cards for sale in the narthex. There is a new supply of sympathy, Christmas, get well, birthday, thinking of you and blank cards. Prices range from \$5– 6 per box, and individual cards are .50. Stop by and check it out!



PENNIES FOR POVERTY



Do you have a lot of loose change around your house? The Women of Z SJ have a collection jar for all your loose change on the narthex table! Any donations to the Penny jar will be given to Wings of Refuge. Help us to fill the jar to make Christmas a little brighter for families in our area!



The meeting was called to order at 10:20 on November 10, 2024, by President Jim B. Present: Jim B, Vickie B, Scott S, Al N, Gene, S, John L, Pastor Kim Wills, Nancy R; Guest: Lorna M; Absent: Judy S, Daren M. Pastor Kim led the group in prayer.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer's report was review and discussed.

- ⇒ New Savings Accounts: Kari M has the authority to open savings accounts for the 150th Anniversary and for the Bell Tower Funds. Once these accounts have been opened, the officers of the church council will need to go to the bank and sign the signature accounts. These accounts should be opened following the annual meeting, as the signature cards need to be signed annually after the annual meeting.
- ⇒ Memorial Account: Lorna M should be added to the memorial account, as she is now the treasurer of the memorial committee.
- ⇒ Motion to approve the opening of the two new savings accounts by Kari M and having Lorna M added to the Memorial Committee bank accounts, Eugene; second, John; carried.

Pastor's Report

- ⇒ Sunday School Christmas Program_ The West Fork school district planned a school concert on the same day and time as the Sunday

School Christmas Program. Pastor Kim called and talked with the superintendent. The school has moved the concert to the evening. Pastor would like members to contact the school and let them know that the scheduling of school events on Sundays is unacceptable.

- ⇒ Church Insurance: The cost of the church's insurance has increased from \$9,500 to around \$35,000. Pastor has been in contact with the current insurance company, Church Mutual, to determine why there was such large increase in the insurance cost. He asked the insurance company to refigure the costs using different deductible and co-insurance amounts. Jim has been in touch with State Farm to get a quote as well. Pastor will keep the council informed about the progress on this.
- ⇒ Update on Funds from Pam H: The church has been notified that Pam Harvey has donated some of her investments to the church. Pastor and Jim have been working through this process. They are not yet sure of the total amount. This money is not a memorial. It is a gift and does not have any stipulations as to how it is used.

Secretary's Report: Motion to approve the Secretary's Report as presented, John; second, Pastor Kim; carried.

Committee Reports

The following members will be responsible for submitting reports for the Annual Meeting: Parish Education & Property – Al; Stewardship – Daren; Technology – Fred Retz; Worship and Evangelism – Vickie; Youth & Family – John; 150th Anniversary – Nancy.

Old Business

- ⇒ Bell and Tower Update: Pastor has spoken with Don Greimann and they have made some repairs. It is still a work in progress.
- ⇒ Mission Payments: __Motion to donate \$500 to Church of the Damascus Road, Vickie; second, Al; carried.

New Business

- ⇒ Christmas Decorating: Saturday, 11/30 at 9:00 a.m. All council members are asked to help.
- ⇒ Christmas Sacks: Gene will take care of getting the supplies. Council will fill sacks on 12/14 at 10 am
- ⇒ Staff Christmas Gifts: Discussion had regarding gifts and the best way to give the gift to the staff. Jim and Vickie will talk with Kari and take care of getting the gifts.
- ⇒ Annual Meeting Date: January 19, 2025 with alternate date of January 26, 2025.
- ⇒ Money Counters: November – John and Al; December – Daren and Judy
- ⇒ No Council Meeting in December
- ⇒ Motion to adjourn the council meeting at 11:07 am and move to Budget Meeting; Gene; second, John; carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy R, Secretary

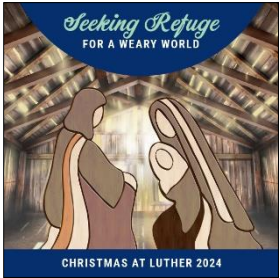


Christmas with Wartburg 2024

Friday, Dec. 6, 7:30 p.m. Lutheran Church of Hope,
West Des Moines

@ Neumann Auditorium, Waverly Saturday, Dec. 7, 3 pm
Saturday, Dec. 7, 7:30 pm
Sunday, Dec. 8, 3 pm

Go to Wartburg.edu for ticket information.



Christmas at Luther 2024

Performances in the Center for Faith and Life:

- Thursday, Dec 5, – 5:45 p.m.
- Friday, Dec 6 – 7:30 p.m.
- Saturday, Dec 7 – 7:30 p.m.
- Sunday, Dec 8 – 2:30 p.m. (also livestreamed)

Livestream and on-demand tickets are available for purchase @ luther.edu

BELL CHOIR PERFORMANCE

The ZSJ Bell Choir will be performing a Christmas Concert with the Franklin County Community Chorus on Sunday December 8 @ 2 pm @ the United Methodist Church in Hampton. A freewill donation will be gratefully accepted.



The hallmark National Lutheran Choir Christmas Festival will once again fill the Basilica of Saint Mary in Minneapolis with a joyous call to gather for Christmas favorites. The festival will include the premiere of a new Christmas suite by Taylor Scott Davis, an American composer frequently commissioned by the UK's VOCES8.

Friday, Dec 13, 4:30 pm

Saturday, Dec 14, 1:30pm

Saturday, Dec 14, 8:00 pm

[YouTube.com/NLChoir](https://www.youtube.com/NLChoir)
National Lutheran Choir

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

Nov 30	9 am	Family Tree/ Sanctuary Decorating
Dec 1	9 am	Sunday Advent Worship with Holy Communion
Dec 4	7 pm	Midweek Worship, “Holden Evening Prayer”
Dec. 8	9 am	Sunday Advent Worship
Dec. 11	7 pm	Midweek Worship, “Holden Evening Prayer”
Dec. 15	9 am	Sunday Advent Worship w/ Holy Communion w/ SS Children singing
	10 am	Holiday Food Fair
	4 pm	SS Christmas Program
	5 pm	Program family supper Holiday Food Fair
Dec. 18	7 pm	Midweek Worship, “Holden Evening Prayer”
Dec. 22	9 am	Sunday Advent Lessons and Carols Worship
Dec. 24	5 pm	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with children in mind
	10 pm	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Dec. 25	10 am	Christmas Festival Worship with Holy Communion
Dec. 29	9 am	Sunday Christmas Lessons and Carols Worship



**All worship services are in person
and
livestreamed @ www.zionstjohn.org**

PRAYER LIST



In order to keep Pastor Kim informed and our prayer list accurate, please let the church office or Pastor know if you are in the hospital or are anticipating hospitalization. You call him directly @ 641-425-9453. Family members are also welcome to call.

Cindy R	Sarah P	Maddie P
Ray R	Kay R	Al N
Christy M	Louise K	Pat H
Patty B	Carolyn R	Jon S
Marcy M	Keely S	Sue K
Doris M	Crystal B	Drew H
Steve K	Sawyer A	Cheryl R
Dusty M	Doug D	Dean D
Cliff C		

⇒ The family of Paige D
⇒ The family of Tammy S

SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE



9:00 am Worship
(Livestream @ www.zionstjohn.org, Livestream)
10:15 am Sunday School & Fellowship

1 Marvin K
2 Cruz W
3 Jesse E, Michael R, Preslee C
4 Colin C, Kenden N
6 Rebecca H, Joseph K
8 Doug D
14 Connie L
15 Brittany G
16 Grant N
20 Georgi S
21 Doug D, LeAnn E, John T
22 Kathy B, Colten H
23 Sue R
24 Coleen B
25 **JESUS!**
26 Deb B, Kelly K, Steve K
27 Alex B, Gene B, Tina H-L, Dakota R, Gage P
29 Hayden F, Cooper W
30 Brett B
31 Norah T



STAFF OFFICE HOURS & CONTACT INFORMATION

G Kim Wills, Pastor 641-425-9453 pastor@zionstjohn.org
9am-3pm, T-F

Leah Cruz, DYFM 641-373-7015 youth@zionstjohn.org
8am-12 pm, T; 8am-8pm, W

Church Office 641-892-4010 mail@zionstjohn.org
9am-12pm, M-F



**Zion St John Lutheran Church
1875-2025
Save the Dates!!**

Sunday February 2, 2025, 9 am Hands to Serve

Sunday May 4, 2025, 3 pm Harmonies Concert

Sunday August 3, 2025, 10 am Home & Family

Sunday, November 2, 2025, 9 am Hearts to Worship

What can you do?

- * Pick up some save the date postcards and send to family and friends who may not be members
- ◆ Write a devotional <https://forms.gle/xQQnPjdDSc6KmcxAA>
- ◆ Written or verbal family stories
- ◆ St John Confirmation pictures from 1909, 1910, 1912, 1914, 1916, & 1941 & Zion Confirmation picture from 1915
- ◆ Donate to our anniversary projects, a wildflower memory garden @ the cemetery, new Bibles & ELW hymnals and/ or a new digital baby grand piano for the sanctuary.

Our next committee meeting will be Sunday December 1, 10:30 am.