

Zion Lutheran Church Mission Statement

“Bonded in Christ’s love, we teach, preach, and equip God’s people for discipleship here and throughout the world.



3rd Sunday after Christmas

January 11, 2026

Rev. Dr. Renae Koehler

For those who are hearing challenged, Zion has digital listening devices for your use during worship. Please ask a council member for one and they will show you how to use it.

Prelude & Ringing of the Bell

Welcome

Gathering our Spirits for Worship *(As you are able please stand)*

P - Today we remember John the Baptist

C - Who invited everyone to come to the water in the wilderness.

P - John baptized the poor, who were being turned away, and the hungry who were being told to wait outside.

C - So, the water was poured where everyone could reach it; at the Jordan river.

P - Even Jesus steps into this river; not above it, not beyond it, but shoulder to shoulder with the waiting crowd.

C - The heavens open. The Spirit descends. A voice breaks through fear and exclusion.

P - “This is my beloved.” And we hear it spoken over us, too.

C - Everyone is included and worthy in this river that still runs.

P - The welcome still stands. Let us worship God who meets us there.

Gathering Hymn – Crashing Waters at Creation ELW #455

Baptized in water,
sealed by the Spirit,
cleansed by the blood
of Christ our king:
heirs of salvation,
trusting his promise,
faithfully now God's praise we sing.

Baptized in water,
sealed by the Spirit,
dead in the tomb
with Christ our king:
one with his rising,
freed and forgiven,
thankfully now God's praise we sing.

Baptized in water,
sealed by the Spirit,
marked with the sign
of Christ our king:
born of the Spirit,
we are God's children;
joyfully now God's praise we sing.

Prayer of the Day

P - Holy God,

C - you meet us not in gated sanctuaries of certainty, but in the muddy rivers of real life. You bless us not because we are spotless but because you are merciful. Sprinkle us with clean water again today. Soften what has grown hard within us.

Give us new hearts, new spirits, and the courage to stand where Jesus stood; among the overlooked, the excluded, and the beloved children still waiting in line. Let your Spirit rest on us, and call us beloved once more. Amen. (*Please be seated*)

Reading of the Scriptures

First Reading – Ezekiel 36:25-28 Renewed with Water

I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you, and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. Then you shall live in the land that I gave to your ancestors, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Psalm 51:6-7 (Please read responsively.)

You desire truth in the inward being;

therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;

wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Second Reading - Acts 10: 47-48 Baptism for Everyone

“Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days. *Here ends this reading.*

Gospel: Matthew 3:13-17 Baptism of Jesus

(Please stand as you are able)

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all

righteousness.” Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw God’s Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from the heavens said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

Gospel - Sing Response (To the tune of ELW #728 Blest Are They)
**Blest are we, to hear the scripture; we are the children of God.
Blest are we, to live God’s teachings; and shine for all to see.
Rejoice and be glad! Blessed are you, holy are you!
Rejoice and be glad! Yours is the kingdom of God!**
(Please be seated.)

Special Music – Kids of the Kingdom

Children’s Message

Sing Blessing of our Children (To the tune of ELW #543 Go, My Children, with My Blessing)
**Go, my children, with my blessing, closer to me. Grow in love
and love by serving, joyful and free. Here my Spirits power
filled you, here my tender comfort stilled you. Go, my
children, with my blessing, joyful and free.**

Homily - Rev. Dr. Renae Koehler

Offering Hymn - In Christ Called to Baptize ELW #575 vs 1 & 4
In Christ called to baptize,
we witness to grace
and gather a people
from each land and race.
In deep, flowing waters,
we share in Christ's death,

then, rising to new life,
give thanks with each breath.

Unite us, anoint us,
O Spirit of love,
for you are within us,
around us, above.
Equip us for service
with gifts you bestow.
In Christ is our calling.
In Christ may we grow.

(Please stand as the offering is brought forward.)

Offering Sing Response (To Be Your Presence ELW #546 vs 4)
**We are your heart, O Christ, your hands and voice, to serve
your people is our call and choice, and in this mission we, the
church, rejoice. Alleluia!**

Offering Blessing

P - God of river and rain,

**C - receive these gifts as signs of our lives being poured out.
As you have washed us clean, use what we offer to widen the
welcome, to feed the hungry at the edges, and to build tables
instead of barriers. Let these offerings carry your promise
downstream so that no one is refused the water of life. Amen.**
(Please be seated)

Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the holy spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of the Church – (*When the pastor says, “Lord in your mercy” please respond with “hear our prayer!”*)

Lord’s Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

**Baptism of our Lord Hymn - “Baptized in Water” ELW #456 vs.
1 & 3**

Baptized in water,
sealed by the Spirit,
cleansed by the blood of Christ our king:
heirs of salvation,
trusting his promise,
faithfully now God's praise we sing.

Baptized in water,
sealed by the Spirit,
marked with the sign of Christ our king:
born of the spirit,
we are God's children;
joyfully now God's praise we sing.

Benediction Litany

P - Go now to live as baptized people; washed, renewed, and sent.

C - May the water remind us that we are drenched with a downpour of God's love.

P - May the Spirit rest on you when you stand outside the gates with those still waiting.

C - And may the voice of God echo in our bones, naming us beloved, before we have proven anything at all.

P - Go in peace, still dripping with grace. Amen

Announcements in the Life of the Church

C - ZION... a place to belong, a place to believe, a place to become!

Sending Hymn - Shall We Gather at the River ELW #423 vs 1 - 3

Shall we gather at the river,
where bright angel feet have trod,

with its crystal tide forever
flowing by the throne of God?

Refrain:

Yes, we'll gather at the river,
the beautiful, the beautiful river;
gather with the saints at the river
that flows by the throne of God.

Ere we reach the shining river,
lay we ev'ry burden down;
grace our spirits will deliver,
and provide a robe and crown. [Refrain]

P- Go in peace and serve the Lord.

C- **Thanks be to God.**

Rev. Dr. Renae Koehler – Interim Pastor 402-867-4044

DeAnn Oltman - Council President 402-223-0561

Michele Kolm – Church Office number 402-806-3601

Email -zionlutheranchurchpickrell@gmail.com

Helping out with Worship Today

Pastor:.....Rev. Dr. Renae Koehler

Organist:.....Shirley Gronewold

Acolytes:.....Grayson Borgman

Korbin Busboom

Lector:.....Jordan Freeman

Greeters:.....Eddie & Lynette Dorn

Bob & Jordan Freeman

Special Music:.....Kids of the Kingdom

January Altar Guild:

Rhonda Fossler, Linda Ideus, DeAnn Oltman, and Annette Wiese

January Table Troop:

Josh Gronewold (Leader), Paul & Shellie Remmers, Les & Mert Rademacher, Linda & Robert Ideus

Snow Brigade:

January 12th - Kyle Schlake (Captain), Eric Parde (Tractor), Chris Fossler, Steve Oltman, Jordan Busboom, Greg Robinson, Hunter Blackwell, Keith Parde, Taiten Harms

January 19th – Josh Gronewold (Captain), Alan Wiese (Tractor), AJ Wiese, Kenny Newman, Paul Jurgens, Gerald Ideus, Todd Bohlmeier, Brian Garton

Vital Statistics for last Sunday

Worship: 132 Giving: \$6,879.04

SS: N/A Giving: \$ N/A

THIS WEEK IN THE LIFE OF ZION

Today

8:45am - Sunday School

9:00am - BKF Club

10:00am - Worship/Kids of the Kingdom

11:45am - Private Baptism

Monday

6:00pm - Men's Choir Practice

note change in time

Wednesday

6:00pm - 7th & 8th Grade Confirmation

Thursday

Ladies Aide

1:00pm Zion Cemetery Association Annual Meeting

Next Sunday

8:45am - SS

9:00am - BKF Club/Adult Bible Study/Endless Hallelujah practice

10:00am - Worship/Communion/Endless Hallelujah

****WELCA General Meeting following worship**

Helping out next Sunday

Pastor:.....Rev. Dr. Renae Koehler

Piano:.....Janelle Ideus

Guitar:.....Deric Bloom

Acolytes:.....Cash Harwood

Millie Garton

Lector:.....Lynette Jurgens

Greeters:.....Tony & Kristin Hoffman

Lynette Jurgens

Special Music:.....Endless Hallelujah

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome to worship! A Warm Welcome to all our visitors. We are so glad you are here & would love to have you visit again! Please sign a visitor card located in the pews and place the information section of the card in the offering plate. We hope to see you again!

IF INTERESTED IN SPONSORING A WEEKLY BULLETIN you may do so by contacting the Church secretary and making a check out to Zion Church for \$75.00.

THANK YOU - To the Kids of the Kingdom for providing special music today.

THANK YOU - With grateful hearts, we want to thank everyone for all the wonderful calls, letters, messages, food, flower/plants, gift bags and especially to Pastor Renae and Zion family for all their prayers during Garys cancer journey. We feel those prayers every day! Also thank you to the Zion sewing ladies for the beautiful blanket. It will be cherished forever. We are so truly blessed!!
Gary and Linda Hooper

ZION CEMETERY ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING will be on Thursday, January 15th at 1:00pm in the fellowship hall.

WILLIE AND ANNA MEINTS COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP

Students attending college can apply for the scholarship for up to 4 years, following the start of the first college semester. Applications are located on the Welcome Center in the Fellowship Hall. **Deadline to submit the application is February 15, 2026.** Please make sure to read the qualifications listed on the application.

Committee members: DeAnn Oltman, Steve Oltman & Laura Fikar

ANNUAL MEETING - January 25, 2026

The Annual Meeting is right around the corner. Please take note of the following dates & submit your year-end annual reports to the Church Secretary no later than Friday, January 9th. Reports can be submitted via email at: zionlutheranchurchpickrell@gmail.com

- **Friday, January 9, 2026** - Year-end reports were due from all committees
- **Sunday, January 18, 2026** - Annual Report will be available for members to review
- **Sunday, January 25, 2026** - Annual meeting immediately after church

HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH WELCA

invites you to attend our

Annual Soup Luncheon

Sunday, February 1, 2026

11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Chili, chicken noodle, and vegetable beef soup will be served, along with desserts and a beverage.

Bring a friend—we're looking forward to seeing you there!

Free will offerings will be accepted.



**online
GIVING**
easy. fast. effective.

GIVING OPTION - Simply scan the QR Code to the right to access Zion's Venmo account

and submit your offering. Offering envelopes and online giving via Vanco are still available to

members as well. **Any members with questions regarding these options can reach out to a church council member.**



Bailey Pointe – Vivian Schuster

Gold Crest - Janice Jurgens, Doreen Wallman, Marilyn Robinson

Good Samaritan – Bob D. Ideus, Mildred Meints

Homestead House - Anora Schoen, Rosanna Miller

Our Homes Assisted Living – Randy Oltman

Beatrice Health & Rehab- Marsha Zulauf

