From the Pastor's Cup....

December 2023

GO AND...Be Present (Nebraska Synod theme for the month of December)

As we await and celebrate Christ's birth, we remember that God is present and shows up. The babe in the manger, God incarnate, is God's gift of deep love for us. We are invited to pause, be still, and be fully present in this holy season. Society calls us to a different place where busyness, spending, and rushing about are marks of success. God, in Christ, offers another way: **Emmanuel—God with us.**

Questions to consider:

- > What can I add to the season that would truly allow me to pause?
- > What tradition do you have that nurtures being present at this time of year?
- > As you are on the GO, how are you going to practice being present?

Prayer: Emmanuel, you are present with us. Help us to be present with each other. Amen.

Dear Church Family,

"For nothing is impossible with God." Luke 1:37

This was angel Gabriel's answer when Mary asked, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" How often do I forget that **for nothing is impossible with God!** Even in a time of war, famine, political unrest, and epic criminal scheming. I find inner peace when I recite, **"For nothing is impossible with God."**

I move away from anxiety and hopelessness about the lack of goodness in my fellow man, into the realm of God's kingdom here on earth. When it seems that humanity is bent on burning everything to the ground, I have to remember that God is at work behind the scenes, doing what God does best.

Lately, my dreams have changed which usually indicates a change is coming! God does speak to us in our dreams! Dreams are God's best work. In our dream world, we are not distracted by our electronic devices or any of the world's myriad of false hope. No, God has our full attention in our dream world and God does take full advantage of it. **For nothing is impossible with God!**

As the angel Gabriel spoke to Zechariah about the birth of his son John, and as the angel Gabriel spoke to Joseph to take Mary as his bride, the angel Gabriel came to Mary to reassure her about God's plan of salvation for her and this world through her son, saying, **"For nothing is impossible with God."**

So, as we await and celebrate Christ's birth, please remember that God is present and near. I invite you to pause, be still, and be fully present in this holy season. God, in Christ, offers us the one and only way to pause: **Emmanuel—God with us.**

Sincerely Pr. Jer

9 am SUNDAY COFFEE FELLOWSHIP IN DECEMBER 2023

Join renowned teacher and historian Ray Vander Laan as he guides us through the land of the Bible. In each lesson, Vander Laan illuminates the historical, geographical, and cultural context of sacred Scriptures. Filmed on location in the Middle East, the faith lessons will transform your understanding of God and challenge you to be a true follower of Jesus.

WHEN THE HARD TIMES COME – Are you going through a difficult period of life? The loss of a loved one? Unemployment? A crisis of faith? During these desert times, it's easy to think God has disappeared. Instead, discover that it's only when we are totally dependent on him that we find him closer than ever and can experience God's amazing grace and provision.

11/19/2023 - Join the Journey

- 11/26/2023 It's Hot Here and There is No Way out
- 12/3/2023 Help is Here
- 12/10/2023 When Your Heart Cries Out
- 12/17/2023 They Were Not Wandering
- 11/24/2023 Ears to Hear
- 12/31/2023 There's Hope in the Desert



6 pm Sunday, December 3, 2023 Candles, Carols and Christmas Stories

We invite you to start your Advent season out right! Come and celebrate the babe in the manger, God incarnate, is God's gift of deep love for us. We invite you to pause, be still, and be fully present in this holy season. On this night, God, in Christ, offers us another

way to celebrate with Emmanuel-God with us.

<u>**7**th</u> & 8th GRADE CONFIRMATION: we take a BREAK in December for Sunday School Christmas Eve Program Practice on Wednesday nights. Our 7th & 8th graders have the lead roles and speaking parts!

Zion Lutheran Church Council Meeting November 8, 2023

Meeting was called to order by President Alan Folkerts

Members present: Brenda Gronewold, Kristi Dorn, VeAnn Jurgens, Neal Meints, Kenny Reed, Cindy Parde, DeAnn Oltman, Carrye Meints
Absent: None
Pastor Jer shared: Regroup & Reflect
Motion made and seconded to accept meeting agenda for 11/8/2023 meeting.
Motion made and seconded to accept minutes from October 4, 2023meeting.

Upcoming Baptisms:

- **11/5/2023**—Wilke Henry Siebert, Kurt & Anna (Jurgens) Siebert
- Upcoming Weddings:
 - 7/27/2024 Emily Lenners & Brendan Lipovsky
- **11/2/2024** Maggie Parde & Cole Baumgartner **November Events:**
 - 11/5/2023 All Saints Sunday

October's Mileage: 1,017 miles

Celebrating God's Work in Progress – Old Business

- **Historical Registry** Connie Thornburg is working on getting the church on the Historical Registry. She had visited with Laureen Riedesel. This would help with the church qualifying for grant money.
- **Picture Directory** Checked into getting more directories printed. The cost has gone up significantly. We will hold off for a year and check into it again. We are encouraging people to use the online version. Copies can be made from there.

Discerning God's Will – New Business

- Christmas Tree Council will set up the Christmas tree on Saturday, November 25th at 9:00 a.m.
- **5th Sunday Offering for December** Council tabled this until some research is done to see where there is the most need, along with the Candlelight Service offering.
- **Coat Drive** Connie Thornburg will be getting this going.
- **Prefilled Communion Cups** The prefilled cups had expired. Waiting to reorder.
- Budget Meeting Council will meet Wednesday, December 13th at 7:00 p.m.

Ministry Team Report as of November 8, 2023

- Financial-General Fund Balance on hand 10/1/2023 \$107,442.84
- Income \$23,334.90
- Balance on hand 10/31/2023 \$106,680.33
- Sinking Fund \$55,700.04
- Seminary Fund \$41,813.73
- Thrivent Mutual Fund \$2,776.58
- Open Savings \$31,818.33

Motion was made to approve the Financial and Ministry Team Reports.

Next Council Meeting will be December 6, 2023.

Devotions - 7:00

Committees – 7:05

Council – 7:30

We closed with the Lord's Prayer

Respectfully submitted, Carrye Meints, Secretary

COMMITTEE REPORTS for November

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE: Did not meet

Treasurers report as of 11/15/23 \$259,230.44

<u>HOSPITALITY</u>

New Business: Going to serve treats after Candlelight Service on Dec 3rd

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE : Did not meet

PARISH ED: Members Present: Kate Meints, Allison Lane, Nicole Behrends, Lanette Nelson, & Jay Bartlett Members Absent: Heather Hippen

- Balance on hand
 - \$1,636.18 as of 11/8/23
- Expenses:
 - \$612.29 for winter curriculum (ordered 11/8)
- Old Business
 - Continue to work on Christmas Program
 - Christmas Eve Program Practice Schedule:
 - December 6th 6:30 7:30 pm– Grades 2-8
 - December 13th 6:30 7:30 pm– Grades 2-8
 - December 20th 6:30 8 pm ALL Sunday School Kids
 - In case you missed the Sunday School calendar here are upcoming dates the kids sing:
 - December 3rd @ 6p Candlelight Service (Amigos Sing)
 - December 10 Kids of the Kingdom
 - December 24th @ 6pm Christmas Eve Program (ALL Kids Sing)
- New Business
 - Ordered curriculum for winter.
 - Kate taught Lanette process.
 - o Tree of Warmth
 - During the month of December, you can bring hats/gloves etc. to place under the tree.
 - Heather will deliver to First Christian Church in Beatrice for distribution.
 - Elnora Lenners plans to write a Thrivent grant for this.
 - o 5th grade Christmas gift shopping
 - Kids will go to Wal-Mart during Sunday School in late November/early December (gift tags were at the mall in years past)
 - Bernice Parde plans to write a Thrivent grant for this.
 - Heather is working on letter to send with Christmas schedule.
 - Nicole working on teacher 'favorite things' list for gift exchange.
 - Gift exchange is 12/17
 - Christmas Eve candy bags
 - Ordering fruit from Henry Garton through FFA
 - Paul & Cindy Jurgens donating popcorn balls.
 - Les & Cindy Lieneman donating the candy.
 - We are looking for another member to join Parish Ed in January 2024
 - Please reach out to any Parish Ed member if you are interested in joining.
 - Nicole will order SCUBA Vacation Bible School material.
 - Heather Hippen plans to write a Thrivent grant for this after the first of the year.

PROPERTY & MANAGEMENT: Kenny Reed, Neal Meints, Alan Folkerts, Doug Parde Checked on lights outside the parish hall and the front of the Church Looked at the exhaust and intake pipe for the fellowship hall furnace Still waiting on bid for fellowship doors, and looked at the front doors of the church

Park Board: Did not meet

Publicity: Did not meet

STEWARDSHIP: Did not meet

WILLIE & ANNA MEINTS ENDOWMENT: Did not meet

WORSHIP & MUSIC: Alnora Daubendiek, Carrye Meints Picked hymns for November 26-December 3rd

YOUTH: Did not meet

Grace Circle News/Minutes

Grace Circle met on November 8, 2023, for our monthly bible study and meeting in the Fellowship Hall.

We started our afternoon with our Thank offering service. Our offering was in the amount of \$126.71. It was decided to send this to CASA.

Our bible study was on Holy Places. Session three "Pilgrimage". Pilgrimage is not only about the destination, but also about "the holy place" of the journey itself. Through the risen Jesus, God meets us on the way. Elnora Lenners led us in the study. Very well done, Thank you Elnora.

Our Chairperson Elnora opened our meeting, Secretary, Lorene Wallman read the minutes. Eleven answered roll call. We had a treasury balance of \$125.00. Our offering was \$45.00.

We collected for our Birthday/Anniversary bank and signed cards to be sent to our shut-ins and servicemen.

Lorene Wallman will be our Vice Chairperson for 2024.

Decisions will be made at our December meeting where to distribute our collection money for 2023.

Irene Busboom, Alnora Daubendiek and Marsha Zulauf are responsible for planning our December Christmas meeting. Watch the Sunday bulletin for information.

No other business.

Closed with the table prayer and refreshments.

Secretary, Lorene Wallman

<u>Grace Circle will have their Christmas get together</u> at Church on Wednesday, December 6th at 11:30 am. More details yet to come watch the bulletins.

150th Anniversary Silent Auction

Silent auction In the Fellowship Hall with all proceeds going to the 150th Anniversary celebration. **This will end on December 3**rd so it will be perfect timing for gift giving this holiday season. Thanks to all who have denoted



Thanks to all who have donated.

Items to bid on: A toy barn, an antique child desk with chair, an antique desk chair, quilt rack, chess/checkerboard, Wii Fit, a painting of the church, a John Deere quilt, a t-shirt quilt, sour dough starters, and hair products/services. Last Chance to get your bids in on the Silent Auction - ending soon!





Poinsettia sign up sheet is on the Welcome Center. Everyone again this year is responsible for getting their own poinsettia but please sign the sheet with who you are wanting to give in memory of or in honor of. The names will be listed in the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day bulletins and the January newsletter.

Fifth Sunday & Special Offerings for the remainder of the year.

- December 3rd Candlelight Service Blue Valley Community Action. They currently have about 150 children in Gage County (Beatrice, Pickrell, Filley, Adams) who are in need this holiday season.
- **December 24th** Beatrice and Freeman backpack program
- December 25th Beatrice and Freeman backpack program
- December 31st TBA

<u>Baptism</u>

<u>We welcome our newest member in Christ today with the baptism of Wilke Henry</u> <u>Siebert –</u> son of Kurt and Anna Siebert. Born July 21, 2023. Sponsors for Wilke are Bob and Jordan Freeman and Abbey and Will Lanik.

Sympathies

<u>Our deepest sympathy to the family of Lonnie Brown.</u> He passed away November 3rd and his funeral was help November 8th at Fox Funeral Home. Please keep Maizy Wollenburg, McKaila Bayless and Wyatt Brown in your prayers.

Our deepest sympathy to the family of Marlene Pittman. She passed away November 10, 2023, and her funeral was November 17th at The Pickrell United Methodist Church. Please keep Kate & Matt Meints in your prayers, Marlene was Kate's grandma.

<u>Our deepest sympathy to the family of Evelyn Kisling.</u> Evelyn passed away Tuesday, November 14, 2023, and her funeral was at Zion on Monday, November 20th. Please keep Thees & Irene Busboom as Evelyn is Irene's sister and the whole extended families in your prayers.

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.

Bulletin's sponsored in November

The week of November 5th - sponsored by Elaine Waltke in Memory of Willard (her husband's) birthday. Happy heavenly birthday Willard!

<u>The week of November 12th</u> - sponsored by Shirey Gronewold in Honor of what would have been her and Ehme's 63rd wedding anniversary.

<u>The week of November 19th</u> – sponsored by Mildred Fossler and family in memory of Harvey (her husband) he would have been 95 years old on November 28th. Happy heavenly birthday Harvey.

The week of November 26th – The Parde family in honor of Bernice Parde for her birthday that was on November 22nd. Hope you had a happy birthday Bernice!



Endless Hallelujah is looking for people to join their musical

group. Please come and practice on Sunday mornings at 9:00 am and they are also adding a Wednesday night practice once a month from 6-7 pm. They will practice the Wednesday night before the Sunday that they are scheduled to sing. Come and have fun and fellowship!

YOUTH NEWS/Sunday School News

Christmas Eve Program Practice & Important Dates:

November 29th – 6:30-8:00 pm 7 & 8 grade. December 3rd – 6 pm Candlelight Service - **Amigos sing**

- December 6th 6:30 pm- 7:30 pm Grades 2nd 8th
- December 13th 6:30 pm 7:30 pm Grades 2nd 8th
- December 20th 6:30-pm-8 pm ALL Sunday School Kids
- December 24th No Sunday School 6 pm Christmas Eve Program



Summer Camp 2024

<u>Early Bird Savings</u> – if sign up before January 31st. Also don't miss out on getting signed up for summer camp by waiting to long to get signed up! <u>Leadership Camp</u> for grades 9-12

Job opportunities!

<u>2024 Summer Guide booklet</u> – a coupon in the booklets for first time campers.

<u>Camp Vouchers</u> - for Camp if someone wants to sponsor a Camper that may not be able to afford to go to Camp.

Check out the posters on the bulletin boards by the front doors for more information - And the Welcome Center for the pamphlets for all of the above.

7th Graders are sponsoring a CASA family of 3 children and their mother.



November 26^{th,} they worked on two tie quilts for 2 of the children, a 2-year-old and a 5-year-old.

The 7th grade class will be going shopping next Sunday December 3rd to purchase the rest of the gifts for the family. Pastor Jer donated 2 wooden homemade toys and Karen donated a baby quilt for the newborn baby. Thank you to Lindsey Remmers for writing a \$250 Thrivent Grant for this project! And thank you to the 7th grade teachers – Hannah Hrenchir and Doreen Remmers.

YOUR VOCATION FOR THE MONTH What you do for God!

WORSHIP LEADER SCHEDULE

December 3

Organist: Alnora Daubendiek Acolytes: Harley Grone Colt Rinne Lector: Elnora Lenners Greeters: Council Special Music: Men's Choir Breakfast Club: Paul Remmers

December 10

Organist: Shirley Gronewold Acolytes: Paxton Parde Presleigh Borgman Lector: Paul Jurgens Greeters: Mickey Larkins Dean & Karen Zimmerman Special Music: Kids of the Kingdom Breakfast Club: VeAnn Jurgens

December 17

Keyboard: Janelle Ideus Guitar: Deric Bloom Acolytes: Jayden Wiese Max Cornelius Lector: Kelly Lenners Greeters: Darwin & Susan Buss Eddie & Lynette Dorn Special Music: Endless Hallelujah Breakfast Club: Jennifer Mahler

December 24

Organist: Alnora Daubendiek Acolytes: James Scholl Brogan Ideus Lector: Stan Lenners Greeters: Beth & Alex Buhr Dennis & Rhonda Fossler Breakfast Club: No Sunday School

December 25 Christmas Day

Organist: Alnora Daubendiek Acolytes: Pastor Jer Lector: Karen Gilbreath Greeters: Council Breakfast Club: No Sunday School

December 31

Organist: Alnora Daubendiek Acolytes: McCoy Peters Konnor Kolm Lector: Carrye Meints Greeters: Robert & Linda Ideus Terry & DeAnn Oltman Breakfast Club: No Sunday School

Altar Guild December

Sandy Meints, Marcella Rademacher, Susan Newman, Carol Young, Lorene Wallman

Table Troop December

Stan Lenners (L), Mary Lenners, Al Wiese, Doug Parde, Jeff Busboom, Steve Gronewold, Mark Buhr, Alex Buhr, Duane Zulauf

Snow Brigade for December

<u>Week of Dec 4 – Mark Buhr **Captain**</u>, Gary Gronewold – Tractor, Stan Lenners – Tractor, James Lenners, Billy Harms, Larry Gronewold, Dale Zimmerman, Luke Ideus, Justin Hippen.

<u>Week of Dec 11 -</u> Greg Dorn **Captain**, Dean Zimmerman – Tractor, Russ Wallman Tractor, Paul Remmers, Craig Ideus, Terry Gronewold, Dave Holland, Alex Buhr, Mike Busboom.

<u>Week of Dec 18</u> – Matt Meints **Captain**, Les Lieneman – Tractor, David Meints – Tractor, Gary Wiese, Andy Schoen, Perry Jurgens, Josh Nelson, Jeff Wiese, Jason Lovitt.

<u>Week of Dec 25-</u> Jordan Busboom ** Captain**, Eric Parde – Tractor, Chris Fossler – Tractor, Duane Jurgens, Greg Robinson, Larry Johnson, Hunter Blackwell, Keith Parde, Steve Oltman, Donny Schuster.

Zion is helping Blue Valley Community Action Wishlist program this year by adopting children who are in need of a

Christmas miracle. Through this program you can adopt a star that represents a Gage County child. If you or your family, church group, or Sunday School class would like to adopt a child, simply take the star, shop for them, and **return the star and unwrapped gifts in a bag by December 10.** Those gifts will then be returned to Blue Valley Community Action to be delivered to the recipient.

If you don't feel like shopping our Candlelight offering will be supporting this program through Blue Valley Community Action. There are currently approximately 150 youth in need of this program this year. We are currently working to secure a Thrivent grant to help with this project.

Help us make Christmas merry throughout Gage County.

CASA DONATIONS – 12 Days of Christmas – Six Sundays at Zion



November 12th Donations 143 items

Canned veggies/fruit 83 Rice 8 Vegetable oil 1 Cookies 4 Juice 2 Fruit cups 1 Stove top stuffing 14 Cereal 8 Powdered milk 2 Dish soap 6 Trash bags 2 Sandwich bags 4 Boxed crackers 6 Salt & Pepper 2

120 items purchased with Carley Remmers \$250 Thrivent Grant for this project.

Soup, canned veggies, canned fruit, cereal, salt and pepper, cereal, cookies, rice, crackers, veg oil, peanut butter, and jelly.

Thank you Carley!







23 more items - total of 326 items so far! With 3 more Sundays to go!

40 more items

Thank you's received.

Thank you's from the food that was donated to CASA and the Mini Mart at Beatrice High School

Thank you!

Your donation is making a huge positive impact on the lives of many! Included are a couple of notes from families who use the Mini Mart!

Blessings!

Thank you for your Donation,

My family and I really appreciate the kind details on your part. The willingness to help others by giving out essential resource others may need really helps a lot.

In troubled times like the ones my family is going through now, it really helps and relieves some worries. Thank you all, and may you be blessed with the kindness and goodness you deserve. Sincerely

C.A.

To all whom this affects:

Thank you for all the help with groceries. I appreciate all that you do and continue to do for people in need. You have been a huge blessing to our family. God Bless you and what you are doing.

Sincerely S.E.

<u>Thanks for your donation</u> to the Freeman TeamMates. Freeman TeamMates is a rewarding program for both the Mentor and Mentee! Freeman TeamMates Board

A BIG thank you to all those who provided shoeboxes for Operation Christmas

<u>Child!</u> They had another successful year! Because of your generosity those special children will have a wonderful Christmas along with learning more about our Savior!

Thanks so very much! Karla Carstens

Thank you to everyone that took the time to send birthday greetings to Bernice for her 95th birthday. She has enjoyed hearing from so many of her Zion friends and reading all the cards.

Thank you to the Memorial Committee for the donation of candle holders for the Candlelight Service.

Dear Zion Lutheran,

Thank you for your generous gift of \$500.00, which was received on November 8th, 2023 from Zion Lutheran Church, Your gift has been designated to support the Carolyn Scott Rainbow House, as you requested.

The Rainbow House has been a welcome home-away-from- home to thousands of families since it first opened its doors in 1983. When a child requires a lengthy hospital stay, the Rainbow House provides relief in so many ways, It serves as an inexpensive alternative to hotel costs...provides a restful and loving atmosphere where families can get a meal and be together...and becomes a source of support when they meet other families who understand all too well the stress of a child's extended hospital stay and the toll it takes on everyone.

Your generosity helps make this all possible as the Rainbow House depends on the caring support of people like you to continue in its mission. We cannot thank you enough for this wonderful gift to the patients and families served through Children's Hospital and Medical Center.

Sincerely Beth A Greiner Senior Vice President & Executive Directory

Thank you to all those who volunteered their time to help decorate the

church for Advent. Once again, the Church looks beautiful!



That time of year again to update information.

If you have had an address change, phone number changed, or something just isn't typed correct, birthdays added, or not receiving the newsletter.

Let Karen know in the church office at 402-661-9362.

2024 Annual Meeting is scheduled for January 21^{st.}

Just a reminder that the annual reports will be coming due! Where has another year gone? The <u>deadline for</u> <u>the reports is January 12th</u> if at all possible. So, I can get them out the Sunday before for review.





DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

2 Heath Grone 3 Peggy Johnson Allison Lane 4 Henry Behrends **Dennis Buhr Ainsley Hostetler** Cole Parde **Deborah Rinne** 5 Amber Dorn 6 Lincoln Eickhoff Anthony Hoffman Breanna Pennisi 7 Janice Jurgens 8 Hunter Blackwell Henrietta Jurgens 9 Baylor Scott Duane Schuster 10 Beth Buhr John Gronewold Sarah Bartlett Shelby Petrzilka Ashley Rademacher 23 Payton Huls Watson Gronewold 24 Declan Leehy 12 Paige Buss Maizy Wollenburg 25 Joyce Harms

13 Stephanie Wallman 14 Alex Busboom Kiera Busboom Jonathan Rademacher Nicole Behrends Kit Meints 15 Terry Gronewold **Dave Holland** 16 Lynette Jurgens Jayden Wiese **17 Janet Harms** Garrett Lenners Mildred Meints 18 LeAnn Fossler Mildred Fossler Debra Thompson Dean Zimmerman 19 Dusty Mencl 21 Christy Buhr Abbie Hoffman 22 Shane Parde

Peyton Winkle

Marilyn Robinson

26 Myles Mierau 27 Avery Busboom Mari McKee **Terry Trauernicht** 28 Kristen Meyer Clara Fehringer Laura Fikar Jill Huls Les Lieneman Jeff Wallman **Emma Frerichs Avery Frerichs** 29 Ada Gronewold 31 Paige Mahler Mavis Dorn

December 2023

					1	2
3 8:45 SS 9 am BKF Club/Adult SS 10 am Worship/Communion/ Men's Choir 6 pm Candlelight Service	4	5	6 11:30 pm Grace Circle 6:30-8:00 2 nd -8 th grade Christmas pract 7 pm Committee Mtg 7:30 pm Council Mtg	7	8	9
10 8:45 SS 9 am BKF Club/Adult SS 10 am Worship/Kids of the Kingdom/Baptism	11	12	13 6:30-8:00 2 nd -8 th grade Christmas pract 6-7 Endless Hallelujah practice **Print Bulletin (Karen will be gone Thurs-Sun)**	14	15	16
17 8:45 SS gift Exchange 9 am BKF Club/Adult SS 10 am Worship/Endless Hallelujah/Communion	18	19	20 6:30-8:00 All Sunday School Students Christmas Practice	21 Ladies Aid	22	23
24 8:45 No SS 9 am Adult SS 10 am Worship 6 pm Christmas Program	25 10 am Christmas Day worship/Communion	26 <u>**Newsletter</u> <u>Print day**</u>	27	28 Ladies Aid	29	30

31 8:45 No SS

9 am Adult SS 10 am Worship/Men's Choir/Communion