

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



Seventh Sunday of Easter Recognition Sunday with Holy Communion

May 17, 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 - Lift up your hearts; the Christ has ascended in glory!

C - And already heaven is blooming inside the earth.

P - Jesus is not gone from us, but moving through us.

C - The Holy Spirit is rising like fire in our bones.

P - Sing to God with shouts of joy!

C - For Jesus is drawing all things upward in love.

Gathering Hymn - Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer ELW #618

Guide me ever, great Redeemer,
pilgrim through this barren land.

I am weak, but you are mighty;
hold me with your pow'rful hand.

Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
feed me now and evermore,
feed me now and evermore.

Open now the crystal fountain
where the healing waters flow;
let the fire and cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through.
Strong deliv'rer, strong deliv'rer,
shield me with your mighty arm,
shield me with your mighty arm.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside;
death of death and hell's destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs and praises, songs and praises
I will raise forevermore,
I will raise forevermore.

Prayer of Opening our Hearts to God

P - O Ascending Christ,

C - today we give thanks that the veil between heaven and earth is thinning around us. Your joy is unfolding in wounded hearts, courage is awakening where fear once slept, and the stones are singing beneath our feet. We lift our eyes and feel the wind of renewal moving through Zion and through our lives. We thank you that grace is arriving like dawn across the prairie sky. Amen.

Reading of the Scriptures

First Reading - Genesis 5:21-24 Enoch walks with God.

When Enoch had lived sixty-five years, he became the father of Methuselah. Enoch walked with God after the birth of Methuselah three hundred years and had other sons and daughters. Thus all

the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty-five years. Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him.

Psalm 47:1-2 & 5-6 *(Please read responsively)*

Clap your hands, all you peoples;

shout to God with loud songs of joy.

For the Lord, the Most High, is awesome,

a great king over all the earth.

God has gone up with a shout,

the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.

Sing praises to God, sing praises;

sing praises to our King, sing praises.

Second Reading - Acts 1:6-11 The Ascension of Jesus

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." *Here ends this reading.*

(Please stand as you are able)

Gospel - Luke 24:44-53 The Ascension of Jesus

Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you that everything written about me in the law

of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised, so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were continually in the temple blessing God. *(Please be seated.)*

Gospel Sung Response tune - Darwall's 148th #893

Rejoice, give thanks and sing: your Sovereign God adore! The scripture has been read to guide us evermore. Lift up your heart, lift up your voice! Rejoice again, I say Rejoice!

Children's Message

Sung Blessing for our Children - Go, My Children, with My Blessing
ELW #543 vs 1

Go, my children, with my blessing, never alone. Waking, sleeping, I am with you, you are my own. In my love's baptismal river, I have made you mine forever. Go, my children, with my blessing, you are my own.

Homily - Rev. Dr. Renae Koehler

Offering Hymn - Jerusalem, My Happy Home ELW #628

Jerusalem, my happy home,
when shall I come to thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end?
Thy joys when shall I see?

O happy harbor of the saints,
O sweet and pleasant soil!
In thee no sorrow may be found,
no grief, no care, no toil.

Thy gardens and thy gallant walks
continually are green;
there grow such sweet and pleasant flow'rs
as nowhere else are seen.

There trees forevermore bear fruit
and evermore do spring;
there evermore the angels sit
and evermore do sing.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem,
God grant that I may see
thine endless joy, and of the same
partaker ever be!

(Please stand as the offering is brought forward.)

Sung Offering Response tune #841 Lift Every Voice and Sing
**Lift ev'ry voice and sing, till earth and heaven ring; ring with
the blessings of our offering. Let our rejoicing rise, high as the
listen-ing skies, let it resound loud as the rolling sea.**

Offering Blessing

P - Holy Giver of Gifts,

C - we thank you that abundance is already multiplying among us.

As Jesus lifted his hands in blessing before ascending, so we bless these offerings with joy, trusting that compassion is already spreading, hungry people are already being nourished, and hope is already taking root. Receive these gifts and lift them into your shining work of healing the world. Amen.

(Please be seated)

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,

**the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,

**the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,**

**was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;

he suffered death and was buried.

**On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven**

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

**He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son
is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism
for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.**

Prayers of the Church - *When the pastor says, "Lord in your mercy" please respond with "Here 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.**

Holy Communion Liturgy

P - The Lord be with you.

C - And also with you.

P - Lift up your hearts.

C - We lift them to the Lord.

P - Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C - It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P - It is our joy, at all times and in all places to give God thanks and praise.

The Words of Institution

Holy Communion - All visitors are welcome at the Lord's Table

Communion Hymn - Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling ELW #608

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,
calling for you and for me.

See, on the portals he's waiting and watching,
watching for you and for me.

Refrain:

"Come home, come home!

You who are weary, come home."

Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,
calling, "O sinner, come home!"

Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading,
pleading for you and for me?

Why should we linger and heed not his mercies,
mercies for you and for me? [Refrain]

Oh, for the wonderful love he has promised,
promised for you and for me!

Though we have sinned, he has mercy and pardon,
pardon for you and for me. [Refrain]

Prayer After Communion

P - Radiant Christ,

C - your life flows through our veins like living fire. We rise from this communion table knowing that your presence has not vanished into the clouds but has entered more deeply into our beating hearts. We thank you that your love is already ascending through us into the world. Amen.

Benediction (responsively)

P - Go now in joy, for Christ has ascended beyond every boundary.

C - And the Holy Spirit is alive within us.

P - Go as witnesses of wonder, mercy, and courage.

C -We will help lift the world toward love.

P - Clap your hands and sing with all creation!

C - For the Risen Christ goes with us now and always. Amen.

Announcements in the Life of the Church

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

Sending Hymn - God Be With You Till We Meet Again. ELW #536

God be with you till we meet again;
by good counsels guide, uphold you,
with a shepherd's care enfold you:
God be with you till we meet again.

Refrain:

Till we meet, till we meet,
till we meet at Jesus' feet;
till we meet, till we meet,
God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again;
holy wings securely hide you,
daily manna still provide you;
God be with you till we meet again. [Refrain]

God be with you till we meet again;
when life's perils thick confound you,
put unfailing arms around you;
God be with you till we meet again. [Refrain]

P - Go in peace and serve the Lord.

C - Thanks be to God.

Next Sunday

10:00am - Worship

Helping out next Sunday

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

Organist.....Alnora Daubendiek

Acolytes:.....Micah Hofstetter

Hunter Grone

Lector:.....Pam Trauernicht

Greeters:.....Kevin & Pam Trauernicht

Dorothy Trauernicht

Special Music:

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!

THIS WEEKS BULLETIN IS SPONSORED BY: None

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.

FIFTH SUNDAY – The offering for the fifth Sunday in May will be designated to the cemetery fund.

ZION FULLER PARK NEWS -The Zion Park Board expresses its gratitude to all who contribute and support our ballpark. Maintaining the park requires significant time and financial resources. We would like to take this opportunity to extend our thanks to the family of Leonard and Caroline Gronewold. Our appreciation goes to Jeff, Pam, Jim, and their families for their generous donation towards the acquisition of a new flag and flagpole for our park. We hope everyone has had the chance to see it proudly displayed! It is a wonderful enhancement to our park, coinciding with our Country's celebration of 250 years of freedom!

SAVE THE DATE - We have scheduled a date for the dedication of this new flagpole. We invite you to join us after church on June 14th (National Flag Day) at the park. While we are still in the planning phase regarding the details of the event, we can confirm that there will be a flagpole dedication along with a meal available for free will donations, featuring our famous burgers, brats, and hotdogs.

We are also excited to share that we are raising funds for several initiatives, including additional water sprinklers for the ball field, upgrades to some items in the concession stand, and building a fund to eventually purchase a new mower.

Thank you from the Board – Greg Robinson, Greg Dorn, Todd Bohlmeier, Jerod Ideus, Josh Jensen, Kevin Meyer, Blake Meints, Terry Oltman

FARM FRESH EGGS - Farm fresh eggs are now available for purchase! Suggested price is \$3 per dozen and can be found on the Welcome Center. Proceeds will support various projects around the church. Eggs have been generously donated by Don Schuster—thank you for your kindness and support!

AMERICA 250 - The Nation's upcoming birthday July 4, 2026, honors the 250th Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America, with a focus on gratitude, religious freedom, and service. As part of the "America 250" we are planning to commemorate this historic moment in our nation's history here at Zion. On Sunday morning, **June 14th**, we will gather to celebrate and honor America. As this event is still in the planning stages, we do have a plan to include a display of Quilts of Valor from our present and past Zion members. We are also hoping to award a Quilt of Valor. **At this time, we are looking for "Quilts" of Valor that have been presented to service members or veterans that attend or have attended Zion. We are also seeking names and contact information for service members or living veterans who may be eligible to receive a Quilt of Valor. As there is a protocol to nominate a candidate, this information is needed in a timely manner. Please contact Denise Schlake-Ideus or Marcia Busboom with any of the above information or if you would like to help with planning this celebration.** We are grateful to be collaborating with Quilts of Valor organizations through Quilt Stitches in Beatrice and "Piecemakers" in Firth.

****The Mission of the Quilts of Valor Foundation is to cover Service Members and Living Veterans touched by war with a comforting and healing Quilt of Valor.*

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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.**

Zion Lutheran Church
@Zion68422



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2026 High School Graduates

Cooper Lovitt - Son of Jason and Amber Lovitt graduated from **Beatrice High School** on May 10th. Cooper plans to attend Southeast Community College and major in Ag Business and Accounting.

Dawson Smith - Son of Neil and DeAnn Smith graduated from Beatrice High School on May 10th. Will attend Southeast Community College in Milford this Fall, majoring in Electro Mechanical Technology.

Morgan Behrens - Daughter of Jeanette Behrens and Steve Behrens graduated from Beatrice High School on May 10th. She is currently undecided on future plans.

Nevaeh Niles - Daughter of Natalie Niles and Faron and Kristal Niles graduated from Freeman High School on May 16th. She is planning to attend University of Nebraska Lincoln and major in Pre-Dentistry.

2026 College Graduates

Crew Meints - graduated from Southeast Community College in Lincoln on May 5th with a degree in Architectural Design.

Chelsea Leners - will be graduating from the University of Nebraska Omaha with a Bachelor of Science degree in Kinesiology. She will be attending the Doctor of Physical Therapy program at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC).

Carley Leners - will be graduating from the University of Nebraska Medical Center with a Doctorate in Occupational Therapy.

