

**Mt. Zion Ev. Lutheran Church**

**320 Mt. Zion Dr.**

**Ripon, WI 54971**

***The Sheppard’s Pen***



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**December 2022**

**The Light Of The World Has Dawned!**



*The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. For those living in the land of the shadow of death, the light has dawned.* (Isaiah 9:2 EHV)

Following our family traditions or our personal planning, we either have started decorating our homes and churches or we soon will as Christmas approaches. Already we can see more Christmas lights on homes around our neighborhoods. There are many secular and religious customs are followed during this time of the year. For the Christian, Christmas is the celebration of the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ, Immanuel. He is the light of the world as the Apostle John recorded in his Gospel. Christians congregations have rejoiced at the birth of our Savior throughout the generations since the Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem and will continue to rejoice and celebrate this miracle until our Savior returns in glory.

The four Sundays before Christmas are called the season of Advent. The very word ‘Advent’ is a Latin word which itself means “coming to”. Advent is a time when we are getting ready to celebrate the first coming of our Savior. It is also a time when we look forward to the Savior’s return on the Last Day. Just as John the Baptist called people to repent of their sins as the Savior was coming into the world, so also Advent is a season in which we are called to repentance as we look with joy to that future day when our Savior comes again in his glory to judge the nations.

The four Sundays each follow a different emphasis – Watch! Prepare! Rejoice! and Behold! The four candles on the Advent wreath are reminders of these themes. These four candles have also been given other designations and meanings that Christians use to remind ourselves about our Savior’s first and second Advents. Churches also mark this season with either purple, which reminds us of repentance (as purple does in Lent), or blue, which was chosen by Lutherans who sought to focus the worshippers’ attention to the skies from which our Savior will come again.

The candles and lights of Advent and Christmas serve to remind us of the Light of the World who came and shown into the dark sinful hearts of mankind bringing rescue from sin, death, and hell. They stand as reminders of our victorious Savior who will come again in his glory on the Last Day. They remind us of hope and love. They remind us to watch, prepare, rejoice, and behold.

*Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet, they will be as white as snow. Though they are as red as crimson, they will be like wool.* (Isaiah 1:18 EHV)

**Christmas Services**

Children's Christmas Eve/Candlelight Service: The service will be at 6:30 PM on Saturday December 24th.  We have begun practices for the children's songs and parts. Please bring your children to Sunday School so they have a chance to participate and practice. There are no Saturday practices this year.

Christmas Day Service will be held on Sunday December 25th at 9 AM with communion.

New Year's Eve Service will be held on Saturday December 31st at 6:30 PM with communion.

PLEASE CHECK YOUR CALENDARS AND BULLETINS FOR ALL EVENTS.

**General Announcements**

**Private Communion**

Pastor Sheppard is happy to offer private communion to those who prefer it; simply email him ([revmikesheppard@gmail.com](about:blank)) or call him (920-745-0883) to schedule a time.

**Online Streaming**

We are livestreaming on Facebook Live Sundays at 9:00am. Services will also be uploaded to Rumble (Mt. Zion’s channel is ***mtzionripon***) and the link will be posted on the church website in the VIDEOS subheading under the MEDIA tab. Services will still be available on DVD. Please feel free to contact Pastor Sheppard with questions.

**Christian Family Solutions**

*Christian Family Solutions*is a WELS affiliated organization providing counselling services to the hurting. Both in person and video appointments are available for those in need by contacting CFS directly. Mt. Zion is a partner with them through the *Member Assistance Program (MAP).* Our church has a fund dedicated to assisting our members with the cost of these services. If financial assistance is needed, Pastor Sheppard notifies Christian Family Solutions and assistance will be given towards the cost of appointments. Video counseling by computer may be conducted at the church when necessary. For more information, visit [**https://christianfamilysolutions.org**](https://christianfamilysolutions.org)**.**

**Altar Flowers**

If you wish to have flowers put on the altar in the future, **please contact Marilyn Ninneman at 748-6474 in addition to signing up on the flower chart.**

**Kitchen & Church Cleaning**

2 cleaning lists have been created - one is on the bulletin board upstairs and includes everything except kitchen tasks. Another list is in the kitchen for tasks to complete there. This is open to anyone in the congregation who is willing to help. When you complete a task, please write your name and date completed by that task. Thank you for your help!

A map of the world

Description automatically generated with medium confidence**Helping Hands**

If you are interested in helping someone with technology, helping give rides to appointments in Ripon, Berlin, Oshkosh, or Fond du Lac, please let Joanne Gregor know. If you or someone you know needs assistance, please contact Lisa Tremore at 920-229-1297, Tammy Niemuth at 920-299-0240 or Joanne Gregor at 920-896-1518. **If you need assistance of any kind, please do not feel like you are imposing; this is why Helping Hands exists!**

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**Kids C.A.R.E.:**

In September, we launched the LWMS Kids C.A.R.E. home mission project, “Mi Amigo Jesús” (My Friend Jesus), for the Family Ministry Outreach Fund–Hispanic Ministries. This Kids C.A.R.E. project will support home mission congregations that want to begin or expand outreach efforts to their Hispanic families and communities with toddler/early childhood social interactive programs, such as Mornings with Mommy. You can support this home mission by using your weekly offering envelopes. Thank you for your support. Please keep Kids C.A.R.E. in your prayers.

**LWMS**

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| FELLOWSHIP IN LATIVIA |
| |  | | --- | | A group of people sitting around a table with food on it  Description automatically generated |  |  | | --- | | Have you ever heard of the Confessional Lutheran Church in Latvia? Luke and I visited Latvia once in 2002 to apply for fresh Russian visas. Two Latvian pastors (who are brothers) took extra good care of us. Ivo and Ugis Sildegs arranged a place for us to stay, showed off tourist sights, and helped us contact the Russian embassy. They also introduced us to the Latvian church. We met a team of pastors working on a weekly, professional-grade newspaper aimed at the public. We ate birthday cake with their synod president. We had a great time – even though the February weather was rough! |   A group of people sitting around a table  Description automatically generated |
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| |  | | --- | | Then we went back to Novosibirsk. For the next 20 years WELS had only limited contact with our brothers and sisters in Latvia. In fact, it has been ten years since anyone from WELS visited them. | | This past May 40 participants from CELC sister churches gathered in Albania where Luke and I are currently living. Three representatives from Latvia also attended the conference. One of them was Ivo, the pastor who had cared for us so many years ago. After the conference we kept in touch with Ivo and made plans for a fall visit. |  |  | | --- | | We just finished our second trip to Riga a couple days ago. What did we find? | |
| A person and person posing for a picture on a street  Description automatically generated with low confidence |
| |  | | --- | | Rev. Luke and Jennifer Wolfgramm | |
| |  | | --- | | We found people worried about surviving the winter. We stayed in an apartment in downtown Riga that was freezing cold inside. When we asked the neighbor if her apartment had heat, she said, “No, and we’ll be thankful if the heat ever turns on this winter!” One of the pastors kept busy chopping wood for the church’s wood-burning stove nearly every day of our visit. Another congregation is working to replace its natural gas heater with a geo-thermal system. Leaders repeatedly told us, “We can’t make plans too far in advance. We just need to get through this winter.” |  |  | | --- | | We found people worried about war. A large statue of a woman in downtown Riga commemorates Latvian independence which they won only in 1918 – and promptly lost again during WWII. Latvia has a long history of being controlled by other neighboring countries. They worry that if Ukraine falls, they will be next. Fellowship means sharing each other’s burdens. We listened sympathetically, but we didn’t despair! |  |  | | --- | | Best of all fellowship means studying God’s Word and praying together. The men studied Old Testament “Wisdom Literature.” There was an especially poignant moment when they read Song of Songs: “See how the young man in this book loves his wife? Jesus is our faithful husband who shed His blood for us, His bride. Will He now abandon us to face cold and violence alone? Never!” Those words meant something to those church leaders. What a joy to share God’s promises! |  |  | | --- | | We found opportunities in the church. We met talented, experienced pastors and three gifted seminary students. (That’s huge! There are only 300 people in the Latvian church.) Fellowship means sharing resources, organizing online seminary classes during the year, and in-person courses in the summer. Fellowship means worshiping together on Sunday, drinking tea, and sharing news from Albania, Finland, Germany, and the U.S. Fellowship means rejoicing in our new-found friendships and marveling that this is just the beginning of eternity. |  |  | | --- | | We found opportunities in the community. Everywhere we turned we heard people speaking Russian. Some were from Russia, but many have fled from Eastern Ukraine. They’ve left everything, maybe for a time, maybe forever. They miss home. They miss their families. Fellowship means working together to assist those in physical need. Fellowship means sharing Jesus’ peace with souls groaning for good news. |  |  | | --- | | It was a week of strengthening fellowship. A week of studying, worshiping, and praying together. Visiting, eating, and laughing together. Celebrating our common faith, love, and purpose, and looking forward to the next time we can meet again! |  |  | | --- | | *Written by Jennifer Wolfgramm, world missionary wife on the Europe mission team.* | |

**New Member News**

A person and person posing for a photo

Description automatically generated with medium confidenceWe are happy to welcome two new members to the Mt. Zion congregation: Dennis and Karen Zanto.  Dennis and Karen come to us from the St. John’s, Markesan and already have several friends here who have come from the same church.  Karen says that she and Dennis knew each other in high school but were just friends.  Each went on to marry someone else, but now they have become a blended family with her three daughters, Dennis’s two sons, and thirteen grandchildren.  Both of them are retired but worked in Markesan, then Quadgraphics, and then at Alliance (or Speed Queen, as most of us know it).

Karen occupies her time as a quilter, and Dennis has a 23T bucket hot rod, a show car that he enjoys. He has shown the car at two shows and won awards in both of them!

Please take a minute to greet our new members and get to know them.

Welcome Dennis and Karen!

**Befriend A Missionary (BAM):**

During November LWMS encourages congregations to remember our missionaries with cards that show our support and gives them needed encouragement. Mt. Zion has participated in this project for several years and will do so again this year from Nov. 1 st to November 30th. We are asking our members to write cards to Pastor Jonathan Bauer, Pastor Nathaniel Bourman, and Luke Wolfgramm). As you enter church, you will see a display table with information about each of our missionaries. There will be paper bags with cards that you can take with you to write to each of our missionaries, or if you would prefer to use your own cards that is another option. Please return your cards to Mt. Zion by Nov. 27th, so they can be mailed to our missionaries for Christmas. Thank you for taking a moment to send our missionaries cards.

**100 Missions in 10 Years**

At the 2021 Synod Convention, delegates enthusiastically approved a WELS Home Missions initiative to plant 100 home mission churches and enhance 75 ministires in 10 years beginning in 2023. During the same time, we want to support 75 enhancement grants to help existing congregations reah more souls, often in other cultures. This is a BIG challenge. An impossible one you might say. But this initiative isn’t as much about planting more churches but about sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. It’s about aggressively reaching lost souls. We pray that God will bless our efforts, trusing that he is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine. Learn more about this initiative, stay up to date on progress, and learn how you can get involved in this synod-wide church planting effort at **wels100in10.net.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Carter Samuelson | 12/4/2014 |  | Connor Isaac | 12/21/2017 |
| Robert Reiser | 12/6/1938 |  | Patti Worm | 12/21/1949 |
| Adam Covach | 12/8/1985 |  | Dennis Scott | 12/23/1959 |
| Tammy Weckwerth | 12/9/1968 |  | Nathan Tremore | 12/24/1997 |
| Tinsley Peoples | 12/14/2020 |  | Donna Mueller | 12/25/1941 |
| Judith Robbert | 12/14/2007 |  | Remington Mueller | 12/25/2002 |
| Sage Sutton | **12/14/2007** |  | Carl Mueller | 12/26/1960 |
| Donald Roehl | 12/16/1941 |  | Nicholas Sanchez | 12/26/1989 |
| Robin Scott | 12/16/1961 |  | Darla Weber | 12/28/1976 |
| Elijah TerBeest | 12/17/2015 |  | Sally Ehrenberg | 12/31/1940 |
| Steve Ohlrich | 12/19/1952 |  |  |  |
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**On The Lighter Side**

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| Kenneth and Kari Hielke | 12/4/2014 |
| Dennis and Brenda Miller | 12/9/2000 |
| Donald and Donna Mueller | 12/13/1960 |
| Donald and Joanne Gregor | 12/28/1974 |
| Nichalas and Caitlin Goeldi | 12/31/2016 |
| Timothy and Mandy Kranz | 12/31/2008 |

**Mt. Zion Messenger**

November, 2022

**Mt. Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church**

**320 Mt. Zion Dr. Ripon, WI 54971**

**Pastor Michael Sheppard**

**Church Email: mountzionripon@gmail.com**

Church Website: [www.mtzionripon.org](about:blank)

Pastor’s Office: 920-748-9734

Pastor’s Email: [revmikesheppard@gmail.com](about:blank)

**Newsletter Articles**

**Since there will be more than one person assembling the newsletter, please email the church office with news/articles.** Deadline for articles for the December edition is November 21st, 2022. Please either give news/articles to Jo Meeker or email them to the church office at [**mountzionripon@gmail.com**](mailto:mountzionripon@gmail.com)**.**

***We are always looking for human interest news from our members! If there is any incorrect information, please let us know that as well.***

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