

**Mt. Zion Ev. Lutheran Church**

**320 Mt. Zion Dr.**

**Ripon, WI 54971**

***The Sheppard’s Pen***

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**November, 2021**

**What is shallow thankfulness?**

*Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever.* (Psalm 107:1 EHV)

Thanksgiving comes around once a year and again fast approaches. As a national holiday, the United States celebrates the harvest and the good things our citizens enjoy. As an opportunity for the Christian to reflect on all that God provides both in the harvest and throughout the year, we praise the God of creation, the Triune God. This year again we give thanks. Our giving thanks this year is not limited to that one day a year when many of us gather with family and friends and feast in celebration.

What is “shallow thankfulness”? William W. Reid, Sr. uses this phrase in his hymn and also throughout the hymn explains what he means by shallow thankfulness. He speaks of thankfulness for the worldly wealthiness and our own comfort without considering the Lord’s richer gifts. The Lord’s richer gifts include the gospel - the forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus Christ. The hymnwriter speaks of selfish thanks and praise to the Lord while our deeds don’t follow our words as another Christian goes without. Sometimes we don’t know another has such needs. But when we do know, do we help? The hymnwriter also speaks of joy in earthly things such as food, without regard for what our soul needs.

William Reid calls upon the Lord to forgive us for all this shallow thankfulness. He asks the Lord to forgive us when our lives do not demonstrate our faith in Jesus Christ. He also calls upon the Lord to teach us. Lord teach us to thank you for your grace and love, for your Son. Lord teach us true thankfulness that helps others in their need. Lord open our eyes to view your love and reflect love in our lives.

The Lord’s mercies endure forever. In Christ, our God forgives our sins. This love of God brings the response of love for him. We show thankfulness not only in words but with our whole life. We ask the Lord to continue to teach us and open our eyes so that we may continue to glorify him at Thanksgiving and throughout the year.

**Forgive Us, Lord, for Shallow Thankfulness**

*Christian Worship* #754 (*Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal* #482)

1Forgive us, Lord, for shallow thankfulness, for dull content with warmth and sheltered care,

for songs of praise for worldly wealthiness while of your richer gifts we’re unaware:

2Teach us to thank you, Lord, for love and grace, for life and vision, for a purpose clear,

For Christ, your Son, and for each human face that shows your message ever new and near.

3Forgive us, Lord, for selfish thanks and praise, for words that speak at variance with deeds;

Forgive our thanks for walking pleasant ways, unmindful of a broken brother’s needs:

4Teach us, O Lord, true thankfulness divine, that gives as Christ gave, never counting cost,

That knows no barrier of “yours” and “mine,” assured that only what’s withheld is lost.

5Forgive us, Lord, for feast that knows not fast, for joy in things that meanwhile starve the soul, for walls and wars that hide your mercies vast and blur our vision of the kingdom goal:

6Open our eyes to see your love’s intent, to know with mind and heart its depth and height;

Let thankful days in loving labor spent reflect the truly Christlike life and light.

**General Announcements**

**Changes in Membership**

**Baptism:** Raylee Katelyn Niemuth

**Transfer out:** Brett, Bailey, Memphis & Emerson Long to St. John’s, Princeton; Aaron Ewald (confirmand) to St. John’s, Princeton.

**Released:** David and Beth Lind

**Newsletter Articles**

Since there will be a few different people putting the newsletter together in the coming months, please either give news/articles to Jo Meeker, or email them to the church office at **mountzionripon@gmail.com****.**

**Online Offerings**

The app for online giving has changed. Instead of the GivePlus app, those who wish to donate online with a smartphone will need to download a new app called *Vanco Mobile* from either the Google Play Store or Apple App Store. Your login credentials will remain the same with the new app. The GivePlus app will no longer be supported after January 31, 2021; however, **any recurring gift that you have already scheduled will continue to be made without interruption. It appears that members will no longer be asked to cover a fee for each offering.**

You may also continue to donate from the church website using the DONATION button.

**Choir**

Attention singers! We are always looking for new members to join our adult choir, especially men. Rehearsals are Wednesdays at 6:15pm. During Lent rehearsals are on Tuesdays at 6:30pm. Praising God while having fun is our motto. You don’t have to be the world’s best singer.  Everyone is welcome!!!

**Ladies Aid**

The ladies have been discussing doing a deep cleaning of the entire church building. Men, women, and children are invited to help once they finalize a procedure. **Also, if you brought bars to church for a recent event and have not picked up your pan or container, please do so as soon as possible from the kitchen.**

**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!**

**Flowers**

Thank you to those who have put flowers on the altar during this year. 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.**

**Bible Studies**

For the Sunday study we are watching the first season of the series “The Chosen” and discussing. Monday's study will continue in the book "More Prepared to Answer." Please join us!

**Private Communion**

Pastor Sheppard is happy to offer private communion to those who prefer it; simply email him (revmikesheppard@gmail.com) 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.

**New Member**

The most recent addition to our Mt. Zion family is a very lovely lady by the name of Cherie Anderson (her first name is pronounced Shə-REE). Cherie lived in Ripon as a small child, but spent most of her adult life living in Algoma, where she worked in an appliance store. She was in charge of sales and helped with repairs, and she says she is pretty good at fixing refrigerators! Cherie and her husband John moved to Princeton, and then to Ripon where she worked at the ThedaCare clinic in medical records and reception. She retired from that job seven years ago. Cherie has family in our congregation, as she is a sister to Patti Worm and godmother to Patti’s daughter Kim (Mack). She and John also have a family of their own. Their oldest daughter Autumn lives in Luxembourg and is married to a farmer. Jenni lives here in Ripon and is also married. The next two children are twins – Melissa lives in Ohio, and John Jr. lives in Hilbert. In her spare time Cherie likes to knit small items like dishcloths and scrubbies. We are happy to welcome Cherie and are looking forward to getting to know her better.

**Befriend a Missionary**

**Update from Luke Wolfgramm**

**September 29, 2021**

Hello, dear friends! Greetings from Nebraska! Luke and I are on my family’s farm now, enjoying some time with our oldest daughter, Christina. We didn’t know if we would be able to come to the United States to see our children this summer or fall, but God opened up the door for us to come on August 14th. We are thankful that we have been able to spend some time with each of our three children, our parents and relatives.

God willing, we will head back to Russia via Europe on November 1st. Our time in the US has stretched out a couple weeks longer than anticipated because Luke had hernia surgery and then developed cellulitis in his arm where the IV was, so he was unable to get the COVID vaccine right away. But Luke is back to his old self again, and we had our first dose of the Pfizer vaccine last week. God-willing by Reformation we will be fully vaccinated and ready to travel.

It looks like we will be able to enter most of the countries in Europe where Luke needs to go. We plan (all of this God willing!) first to visit the Swedish church. They have a special weekend of presentations planned November 5-7, and Luke is supposed to preach and present there. Even I get to present to the ladies on the 5th and lead a hymn sing in English on Saturday. Luke has been to the Swedish church, but I am looking forward to going for my first time. I keep in touch with some of the ladies via WhatsApp (a messaging service very popular in Europe), and I can’t wait to meet them in person.

Then we’ll go to Albania. On September 7th, the lead pastor of the Albanian Lutheran Church died suddenly. His name was Pastor Agron Mece (ah-GROHN MEE-chee). He has been the face of the Albanian Lutheran Church for 20 years. Now there are 2 pastors left in Albania and one prospective seminary student. Luke hopes to meet the seminary student and make a plan for studying with him, as well as encourage and help the pastors there.

Finally, we’ll stop in Finland for some meetings and then back to Russia. Andre, Luke’s seminary student in Russia, is doing ok. Not great, but ok. His leg was infected, and the bone the doctors transplanted deteriorated (in other words, the transplant did not work). He is supposed to have another surgery to clean out infection, and another to do second bone transplant. But of course the hospitals are all backed up because of COVID.

Andre has elbow crutches, so he can get around pretty well. He also traded in his old stick-shift car (that he could not drive with one leg) and bought an automatic that he can drive. He is taking care of the Iskitim congregation while Luke is gone. His leg is not doing well, but his spirits are good and his faith is stronger than ever.

We’ve enjoyed spending time with our children this past month. Christina went back to school, not to MLC but to a community college in Lincoln, Nebraska, studying drafting and design. She went to some career counselors and took some tests, and I think she has found a good fit for her talents and personality. She will keep living with my mom while she finishes this two-year program. She loves to go to choir at our home church here, and the congregation here has been very kind to her. She seems to be doing better. We are thankful.

Katie got engaged to her boyfriend from Bethlehem in Menomonee Falls. The wedding is set for June 25, 2022. Right during the LWMS convention! Big oops! Well, we probably wouldn’t have made it to New York anyway. The ladies at Synod Office suggested we could Zoom the wedding in to the convention for a Moments with our Missionaries! Ha-ha! God-willing Katie will graduate in May of 2022. She is roommates with another missionary kid—Chrissy Roebke, whose parents are in Malawi. They have become good friends. We’re really pleased about that. The wedding will be held at Grace Ev. Lutheran Church in downtown Milwaukee, right across from MSOE. That’s the WELS church Katie and her fiancé, Xander (short for Alexander) have been attending all their years at MSOE. They continue to enjoy Wednesday evening Bible classes with the pastor there.

Peter is now in his sophomore year at FVL. He is enjoying it. He still wants to follow in Katie’s footsteps and do Mechanical Engineering at MSOE. FVL has a nice selection of engineering and advanced math classes, which is really helpful. But he still says that his favorite class at FVL is his religion class with Pastor Aaron Dolan. That makes us so happy! We’re glad Peter has the chance to study the Bible in a formal way at high school. And doubly happy that he loves it. He also loves living with Cousin Levi. They have become like brothers. Peter is learning to drive. This is a struggle for missionary kids, because they usually have no opportunities to practice in their home. He got his learner’s permit, and he’s been practicing some. Uncle Peter said of riding with Pete: “It’s the most scared you’ll be at 22 miles per hour!!” I guess he has a ways to go yet!!

The beginning of June there was a retreat for all missionary kids ages 14-25 in Houston, Texas. Our three kids all went and really enjoyed it. It was so nice for the kids to meet new friends who have the same types of backgrounds and challenges that they do! We thank the Board for World Missions for providing this special gathering for missionary kids.

Prayer requests:

* Please pray for the Albanian church: for the pastors, Agron’s congregation, and for Agron’s widow, Vitori.
* Please pray that Luke and the Albanian seminary student would figure out a good plan for his seminary studies, which will be difficult since Luke is usually so far away.
* Please pray for Portuguese pastor Antonio Canoa, who had a severe stroke this summer. And for Pastor Artur Villares, the other Portuguese pastor, who is struggling to serve both congregations in Portugal.
* Please pray for Andre, our Russian seminary student, for healing and for strength to finish his studies.
* Please pray for Luke, as he continues to shift his work to more and more time in Europe.
* Please pray for our children as they continue to adjust to life in the US and away from Mom and Dad.
* And finally, please pray that God would allow us to get into countries in Europe and be a real help to the pastors and students there. And that we would get home safely to Russia the end of November.

Thank you so much for your prayers and encouragement! We and our children appreciate it very much!

Your sister in Christ,

Jennifer Wolfgramm, wife of Befriend a Missionary Luke Wolfgramm

**WLA Capital Campaign**

Winnebago Lutheran Academy is planning to build a new campus within the next 7-10 years. A new campus will provide a new and updated school facility that will benefit all the curricular and co-curricular activities at WLA. In September, 2020, land was purchased on the north side of Hwy 23 one mile west of I-41. The property extends from Hwy 23 to Hwy OOO, nearest to Streblow Dr. and the Community Church. Recently, Tom Schermerhorn came to Mt. Zion on two Sundays to give updates on the land purchase, and to introduce our members to the capital campaign. This capital campaign will look to raise funds to eliminate WLA’s current capital debt, provide funds for the purchase of the new land, and to create a fund for minor improvements that need to occur to provide a safe learning environment on the current campus.

Please contact Kevin Ehlke with any questions you may have at 920-539-4041 or kehlke@wlavikings.org. If you would like to give in support of WLA’s current capital campaign*,* you can obtain a brochure from Mt. Zion, or go to [forward.wlavikings.org/donate](http://forward.wlavikings.org/donate).  Gifts can be mailed to WLA or given online at our website.  Thank you for your continued support of WLA!

On the Lighter Side!

 

David & Donna Smith 11/1/1986 35 years

Warren & Rhonda Schwandt 11/3/1979 42 years

Michael & Amber TerBeest 11/11/2011 10 years

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Lyndon Lynch 11/2/1931

Sue Sheppard 11/4/1973

David Jones 11/6/2018

Todd Picchiottino 11/6/1991

Robin Sitter 11/6/1957

Judy Gurke 11/7/1952

Tamara Hartman 11/7/1957

Tim Lynch 11/7/1961

Roger Mueller, Jr. 11/7/1969

Elizabeth Zellmer 11/7/1971

Joshua Mueller 11/11/1980

Shelly Barrell 11/12/1990

Christian Seiler 11/12/1995

Faith Wichman 11/15/1998

Lindsay Villalobos 11/18/1982

Carl Grahn 11/21/1934

Justen Niemuth 11/23/1982

Josephyne Pick 11/24/2006

Logan Lynch 11/26/1993

Carson Mack 11/26/2003

Debbie Weiske 11/26/1974

Dennis Schliepp 11/28/1949

Alison Bradley 11/30/2004



Mt. Zion Messenger

November, 2021

Mt. Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Pastor Michael Sheppard

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Pastor’s Office: 920-748-9734

Pastor’s Email: revmikesheppard@gmail.com

**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 19th, 2021.

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