

**Mt. Zion Ev. Lutheran Church**

**320 Mt. Zion Dr.**

**Ripon, WI 54971**

***The Sheppard’s Pen***

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 **November 2022**

**Sweet Or Sour?**

Sweet and Sour flavors sometimes go well together. It may not seem like it until we try it. Like the sweet and sour chicken we eat at our local Chinese restaurant. Or like candy that first sourly makes our cheeks ache then turns pleasantly sweet. Each of us to our own taste preferences enjoys the sour or the sweet.

Is God’s Word sour or sweet? The psalmist wrote, *How sweet are your sayings to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!* (Psalm 119:103 EHV) Do you consider the Word of God as the psalmist did, that is, something sweet to the taste? That which tastes sweet is often something we enjoy because of it’s sweetness. As saints we agree with the psalmist. God’s Word is a pleasure to take in. But as sinners we might not agree that everything God says to us in his Word tastes sweet. The commands of God and the threats of punishment for disobedience he makes are sour to our sinful nature. Sour because the commands of God are intolerable to the sinful flesh within us. Sour because in God’s perfect law we are made aware of our disobedience. Sour because the law of God pricks our conscience reminding us of our rebelliousness.

*10Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom! Listen to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah! 11What do your many sacrifices mean to me? says the Lord. I have more than enough rams as burnt offerings and enough fat from well-fed animals. I am not pleased with the blood of bulls or the blood of lambs and male goats. 12When you come to appear before me, who has asked for this from your hands: this trampling on my courts? 13Stop bringing worthlessofferings! Your incense is an abomination to me. I cannot stand your sinful assemblies on the new moons, Sabbaths, and holy days. 14Deep in my soul I hate your new moons and your appointed feasts. They have become a burden to me. I am tired of putting up with them. 15When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you. Indeed, even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. 16    Wash yourselves. Purify yourselves. Remove your evil deeds from my sight. Stop doing evil. 17Learn to do good. Seek justice. Relieve the oppressed. Seek justice for the fatherless. Plead for the widow.*

*18Come 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. 19    If you are willing and obedient, you will eat good things from the land, 20but if you refuse and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword. Yes, the mouth of the Lord has spoken.* (Isaiah 1:10-20 EHV)

The Lord’s rebukes and his calls for repentance aren’t pleasant to the ears of the sinner. The Lord spoke such words of love that called the people of Old Testament Israel to repent. How harsh it sounds to hear the Lord speak of the people of Israel as Sodom and Gomorrah! At the time in which the Lord called Isaiah to be his prophet and speak to Israel, there were believers in Israel and Judah. Only as a nation who were a people that belonged to the Lord they failed to remain faithful to him. In his faithfulness he calls them Sodom and Gomorrah. He equates their wickedness with that of those ancient cities he destroyed at the time of Abraham. He brought temporal and punishment to the inhabitants of those cities and the eternal consequences for unbelief displayed in their outward lives. Israel was walking the same road as Sodom and Gomorrah. Did the people at the time of Isaiah think they were at least somehow better than the people God brought to an end all those years before? Did they think that because they had the temple in Jerusalem or because their fathers crossed the Red Sea that they were exempt from God’s commands or the punishment he spoke of through the prophets? Do we today? Churches accept any number of godless practices, accepting what God calls sinful as being tolerant. Do we do the same in our own hearts? Have we become so desensitized to sin that we don’t think much of it or have become so accepting as to just say it’s the way things are today? God’s Word is sour when it convicts the heart of sin.

God’s word is also sweet. First the sweetness of the promises of God for salvation. Second as believers in Christ, we enjoy the sweetness of God’s law not as an avenue to heaven but as a guide for our lives of praise as we walk the road of life towards the goal of heaven which Jesus secured for us by his suffering and death. God’s Word is sweet as it consoles the guilty not by overlooking, minimizing, or ignoring sin but by God’s promise that in Christ Jesus our sins are cancelled. This too the Lord spoke through Isaiah the prophet. Sins that are like scarlet will be as wool. Sins that red will be as white as snow. These are images of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus for those who believe. The savior of the world was coming many years after Isaiah’s ministry. He has declared you clean of all sins and guilt after being placed under the heavy weight of God’s wrath in our place. In his mercy and forgiveness, we are blessed in our lives here and in the life in heaven prepared for us by our Lord Jesus Christ. God’s Word is sour and it is sweet!

**General Announcements**

**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.

**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!

**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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**LWMS**

Mount Zion Members:

I am happy to report that we collected over 1600 crosses October 15th at the Beaver Dam Fall Rally. (Mt Zion made over 500) **Praise be to God**. We also collected over three thousand pill bottles.

 We also received in donations $716.00 for postage to send the crosses and pill bottles. We are anxiously waiting on the packing and shipping procedures so they may be sent to Africa.  With that said we will NOT be collecting any more crosses or pill bottles.

Thanks for your support of this project.

United to serve

Dianne Witkowski LWMS President Beaver Dam Circuit

Joanne Gregor Spiritual Growth Woman

Pastor Sheppard Spiritual Growth Pastoral Advisor

**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.

**Hymnal Project**

Mount Zion Stitchers and members:

Please come to church on Thursday, November 17th, at 10:00 a.m. for the hymnal project. We will be taking the bookmarks out of the red hymnals and transferring them to the blue hymnals.  Our work will be done in the comfort of the gathering room upstairs. Pastries, breads, and refreshments will be served. Please sign up on the bulletin board upstairs to help us in planning.

**New Member News**

Meet Gil (short for Gilbert) Sheppard! As you may have guessed, he is Pastor Sheppard’s father. He moved here from Saginaw, MI at the end of August, about 2 years after his wife Joyce went to heaven. Gil lived in Saginaw all his life, and was married to Joyce for 51 ½ years. He learned the vacuum and sewing machine repair business from his parents at an early age. He held a few jobs in his adult life, from driving semi delivering auto parts to working at an autoparts store called Dater’s. He took over his parents’ vacuum business in 1999 until 2012 when he and Joyce retired. He can tell you what is wrong with your vacuum just by listening to it! Gil has 2 children- Jenny, who is married to John Henderson, and currently resides in Arizona, and, of course, Michael (a.k.a Pastor), who is married to Sue. He enjoys playing cards and visiting with people – he has many interesting stories from his youth, including stock car racing stories! Welcome to Mt. Zion, Gil!

**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.**

**On The Lighter Side**

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| Lyndon Lynch | 11/2/1931 |  | Shelly Barrell | 11/12/1990 |
| Sue Sheppard | 11/4/1973 |  | Faith Wichman | 11/15/1998 |
| David Jones | 11/6/2018 |  | Cooper Chitwood | 11/18/2021 |
| Todd Picchiottino | 11//6/1991 |  | Lindsay Villalobos | 11/18/1982 |
| Robin Sitter | 11/6/1957 |  | Carl Grahn | 11/21/1934 |
| Judy Gurke | 11/7/1952 |  | Justin Niemuth | 11/23/1982 |
| Tamara Hartman | 11/7/1957 |  | Josephyne Pick | 11/24/2006 |
| Tim Lynch | 11/7/1961 |  | Logan Lynch | 11/26/1993 |
| Roger Mueller | 11/711969 |  | Carson Mack | 11/26/2003 |
| Elizabeth Zellmer | 11/7/1971 |  | Debbie Weiske | 11/26/1974 |
| Joshua Mueller | 11/11/1980 |  | Dennis Schliepp | 11/28/1949 |
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| David and Donna Smith  | 11/1/1986 |
| Michael and Amber TerBeest | 11/11/2011 |

**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

Pastor’s Office: 920-748-9734

Pastor’s Email: revmikesheppard@gmail.com

**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****.**

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