

Zion Lutheran Church

Chippewa Falls, WI 54729

Zion Will Continue To Be Successful

Let me begin by saying thank you for such a warm welcome for me and my family! We are so grateful and blessed to be at Zion Lutheran Church, Chippewa Falls, WI. I think we all can agree that we are excited about the next chapter at Zion and want our congregation to continue to be extremely successful. But, to ask a Lutheran question, what does real congregational *success* mean?

The world defines congregational success by numbers—filling the pews. Of course, we all like it when the pews are full, but we know this is a wrong understanding of Biblical success. If numbers are the definition of success, then Jesus' earthly ministry was a complete failure when He went to the cross alone. It would also mean that the Mormons and Muslims are more successful than Christians, since they are currently growing faster numerically. But, we know they aren't doing things right and aren't Biblically successful. **Christian success is defined by faithfulness to the Word of God** and not numerical success. In fact, numbers should never be our focus, because we have nothing to do with numbers. Let us turn no further than to Acts 2, when the Christian Church was just forming:

37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." 40 And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." 41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls....47And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (ESV)

Maybe you have heard it rightly said about 'evangelism' that what you win people with is what you win them to. Churches that win people with the Gospel of Christ win them to the Gospel of Christ. Churches that win people with entertainment win them to entertainment. If people attend a church because they like the people, the good potlucks, or the young pastor, they will be there as long as they are happy with their friends, the food is tasty, and the pastor's hair isn't gray. Once their self chosen needs aren't met anymore, be it anything from youth programs to social service opportunities, they will leave. I think we have all observed this with those who church hop and shop. People create Christ's Church into their own image. They define what a congregation should be doing instead of how Christ defines the mission of His Church. May this description never include us!

The commission that Jesus spoke to His apostles before His ascension was to make disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching everything that He commands. We are not to subtract, add, or change the means Jesus gives us to gather His harvest. As noted earlier, we observe this in Acts when the apostles are baptizing and teaching (The Great Commission) ten days later at Pentecost: **So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.** This is how Christ grows His Church, through Word and Sacrament only. Scripture doesn't leave this up for debate or invite us to come up with new ways to meet the changing world. The real needs of a fallen world never change. The world needs the Law and Gospel through Word and Sacraments so that they believe and receive the forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation. This is how the Church is created and sustained until Christ returns for His bride. As we heard - **And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.** Notice the emphases on the *Lord added*. The Lord added. The Holy Spirit creates faith when and where He pleases

through Word and Sacrament ministry. If numbers are added to a congregation for any other reason, then they have been won with and to something other than the Gospel. We, at Zion, have the pure Gospel! That is exciting. We pray that the whole world hears this Good News!

May we continue to be faithful to the Means of Grace that Christ gives, and leave the accounting to Him. That is true success. We pray that God's good and gracious will be done always at Zion. Amen.

In Christ,

Pastor

ZION'S WOMEN'S SOCIETY

Members of the Women's Society met on Thursday, August 11th at the Fill Inn Restaurant for lunch.

Pastor and Brianne, ten members and two guests attended the luncheon. We enjoyed the fellowship and being able to visit with Pastor Stark and Brianne.

On Thursday, September 8th we will return to our regular business meeting at 1:30 p.m. here at church.

We have a coffee/tea and a dessert followed by devotions and the business meeting.

All ladies of the congregation are invited and are most welcome to come. If you would like more information about our society, speak with Arlene Hakes, Geneva Emanuel or Joann Ehlers.

BIBLE CLASSES

You are invited to attend our Bible studies on Sunday mornings following our worship service. Beginning Wednesday, September 7th the Wednesday morning classes will resume.

Everyone is invited to attend one or both classes. You are most welcome!

Exciting News from the Board of Education ***Worship, Sunday School, and Youth and Adult Bible Classes***

Children in Worship:

What a joy that we are hearing the sweet sound of "children in worship" regularly! To further encourage the presence of the young ones in church--through a donation of a member—we have available a "*CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY BULLETIN*" each week and a clip-board with a baggie of colors & pencil attached. These bulletins have activities which correspond with the Bible readings for the day.

Parents, encourage your children to pick up a "baggie" of pencils and crayons so that they may quietly work on their bulletin during the sermon time. This helps them to understand what is happening during worship and their faith to "Grow in Christ". After worship they may take home the bulletin, just like we adults do, but please put back their clip-board and "baggies" for use next week.

SUNDAY SCHOOL **BEGINS SEPT. 11TH**

After having 32 kids at VBS, we are ready for Sunday school. Classes will be held for Pre-school (3 & 4 year olds); Kindergarten - Second Grade; and Third - Sixth Grade. We meet in the front of the church for opening devotions after worship ends...about 10:10 a.m. each Sunday morning. Classes conclude at 11:15 a.m. in their class room. There is no charge for materials.

(We do appreciate an occasional donation

of juice bottles and small paper cups, or juice boxes; snack crackers or fruit which we will serve to the children as a snack during lesson time). (It is a long time for those little tummies from breakfast until lunch).

We hope to have the children singing/playing bells once each month during the worship services...using their talents to the glory of God. We will again be giving faithful attendance awards to the children each time they have been in class 4 times. We are also offering a challenge for them for extra memorizing with a reward from the "Memory Treasure Box".

Please return your pre-registration form A.S.A.P. to the Bd. of Ed., so we can prepare for how many students to expect in each class.

Teachers: We are still looking for a few adult volunteers to teach Sunday school on a substitute-part-time basis. We provide the supplies, teaching materials and snacks. All you need to do is share the lessons with them, helping them to "Grow in Christ." **Please contact Pastor or the Board of Education if you might be interested in serving.**

Nursery

We would like all children in worship, if possible, since Christ's bids infants to hear Him too. However, we understand that sometimes parents need to use the nursery at various times for various reasons. We now have a radio in the nursery so parents can still listen to the service when they need to step out of church. Additionally, we would like to offer babysitting in the nursery during Sunday morning Bible class if possible. However, **we need volunteers** to fill a rotation so that young parents too can enjoy the gift of Bible class. Adults, if you are interested in doing a Sunday a month, please contact the Board Of Education.

Youth and Adult Bible Classes

Pastor Stark is teaching our Sunday morning Adult Bible class at 10:15 each week. He would like to strongly encourage all jr. & sr. high school youth to attend this class along with the adults, as he thinks they are mature enough for this challenge, and will help prepare them for adulthood (which is our goal). This will also help adults get to know our youth so that they can encourage them in the faith during such a crucial time in life. Additionally, it will give Pastor some face time with the youth, while, of course, teaching them the Word of God, which is what young and old alike need.

Pastor will also be teaching a Wednesday morning Bible study at the 9:30. If there is a need, we would also be willing to work on offering babysitting during this class.

Look for updates and further information about our Parish Education in the Church Newsletter and bulletins. Also, feel free to contact Pastor or the Board of Education with any questions or suggestions.

New Adult Instruction Class

I am starting a new adult information/instruction class (catechism). This class is for anyone who would like to learn more about what we believe, teach, and confess at Zion. The class is about 15ish weeks and could also lead to membership. If you know someone who might be interested, please have them contact me. - Pastor

REMINDERS!

It is that time of year of year to think about budgets and board members for 2012. All boards should have a budget for their board by the council meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 13th at 6:30 p.m. The final budget that will be presented to the voters will be decided up at the October council meeting and then presented to the voters at the October Voter's meeting on October 23rd.

Please continue to save your Gordy's receipts and stamps. The stamps need to be trimmed about 1/4 inch around the stamp. The monies received from these are sent to missions. Thank you!

Our local food pantry is always in need of non-perishable food items, soap, toilet paper, etc. There is a barrel in the back entrance or drop the items off at the Salvation Army.

Thank you!

HIGHER THINGS: SUMMER 2012 HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH CONFERENCE July 2-7, 2012

Why is this trip so important? There are many reasons that this trip is important. Primarily, it is a great way for your child to learn more and grow deeper in the faith. The instruction that is given by LCMS pastors and professors at these conferences is top notch. Second, this trip helps your child get to know better other youth from our church and around the U.S. These conferences are limited in size, so they are big, but not overwhelming so. There really is a practical benefit for our children to see that there are hundreds of other Lutherans their age who value the same doctrinal and liturgical heritage that we do at Zion. Finally, it's just good old fashioned fun. The Conference focuses on three things: worship, work (learning) and play. The conference schedule always has been fun activities like sports, entertainment, and the like.

High school students (and parents) be looking for more information in the coming weeks about signing-up for next summer's **Higher Things** trip with Pastor.