



Zion
LUTHERAN CHURCH

NEWS

January 2024

From the Vicar's Desk...



Vicar Benjamin Wessel
VicarWessel@
@ZionMitchell.org

Pastor Daniel Grimmer
PastorGrimmer@
ZionMitchell.org

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“You Will Be My Witnesses”:

Explaining Your Faith to Family and Friends

This past fall our Sunday morning study focused on the topic “Always Ready: How to Have Faith Conversations with Non-Christians.” In this study, we explored different ways to thoughtfully witness about Christ to people with various beliefs and faith backgrounds. The focus was primarily on the idea of *apologetics* or defending the faith and giving honest critiques of other religions.

In January the church will be celebrating the season of *Epiphany*, where we talk about how Christ reveals Himself to us and how the Gospel spreads to people all around the world. To go along with that theme, we will be starting a new sequel series to “Always Ready” called **“You Will Be My Witnesses: How to Explain Your Faith in Seven Easy Steps.”** This series will dive into the nuts and bolts of our faith and go into the various ways that you can help people of other backgrounds understand what you believe and why. In this age of division where no one seems to want to take the time to understand each other, it is more important than ever that you know how to explain why you believe what you believe and why your church teaches what it teaches.

Being able to talk about and explain your faith to other people isn't important just so that other people know why you go to Zion instead of some other church in town, and it's not about trying to prove that the LCMS is better than everybody else. Ultimately, it's all about witnessing to people about Christ and the truth of God's Word. We love Jesus and love the Bible, and so we naturally want to talk to people about who Jesus is, what He has done, and what the Bible teaches. That holds true both for when we talk with non-Christians as well as for when we talk to Christians who believe differently from us.

First, when we talk about our faith to non-Christians, we are especially interested in bringing them to know Jesus so that they receive the eternal life that He gives. Lots of non-Christians in the world nowadays have a very negative view of Christians because they think that Christians are only interested in arguing or “being mean” to people. Even worse, many non-Christians have serious misunderstandings about how Christians think about things and what they believe. It's important that when we talk to non-Christians we do so with “gentleness and respect” (1 Pet 3:15) and take the time to help them understand where we're coming from. CONT on Page 5

Zion's Congregational Leadership for 2024



Please commit to keeping our volunteer servant leaders in your prayers throughout the year.

Pray that God would use them to guide and direct our congregation to fulfill His purpose.

Installation of all Congregational Leaders will take place on Sunday, January 7, 2024.

Church Council

Russ Whaley, President
John Fink, Vice President
Diane Sullivan, Secretary
Shannon Bartscher, Treasurer
Eric Schramm, Financial Secretary

Board of Trustees—All serve as voting members of the Council

Chris Wehrmann
Larry Weigandt
Gary Worth
Mark Nagel
Brian Schuldt

Board of Elders—Three representatives serve as voting members of the Council

Adam Schulz, Chairman
Travis Schnabel, Vice-Chairman
Chris Foster, Secretary
Marvin Strand
Doug Schley
Randy Holmquist
Larry Titze

Voter Meeting Dates for 2024

Voters are urged to plan to attend each of these important meetings: January 16, April 16, and October 15, to help conduct the business of the congregation. All communicant members 18 years old and older are also urged to consider becoming voters to help share in the work of the congregation.

Reminders

December 24— No Adult Bible Class or Sunday School
December 26— No Women's Bible Study
December 27— No COFFEE Bible Study or Faith Foundations
December 28— No Men's Bible Study
December 31— No Adult Bible Class or Sunday School

Congregational News

Epiphany—January 6

We invite you to come celebrate Epiphany in worship, Saturday, January 6 at 6:30 p.m. During Advent, we prepare for the coming of Christ whose birth we celebrate at Christmas. The Christmas season spans 12 days from Christmas Day to Epiphany. Then we celebrate the season of Epiphany in which we focus on Christ coming to all peoples throughout all the world.

On the day of Epiphany, we remember the magi who, guided by the promises of Holy Scripture, followed the star to the place where Jesus was. Even today, He calls disciples from all nations by the preaching of His Word.

Come hear that Word with us!



Epiphany Service
January 6
6:30 pm

Salvation Army Stuffing Drive

Thank you to all the members of Zion that helped with the stuffing drive for the Salvation Army Christmas food baskets! Your generous giving resulted in 345 boxes of stuffing mix that were delivered to the Salvation Army. When the community works together, these small donations will make for a bountiful Christmas dinner for families in need.



Salvation Army
Christmas Food Baskets

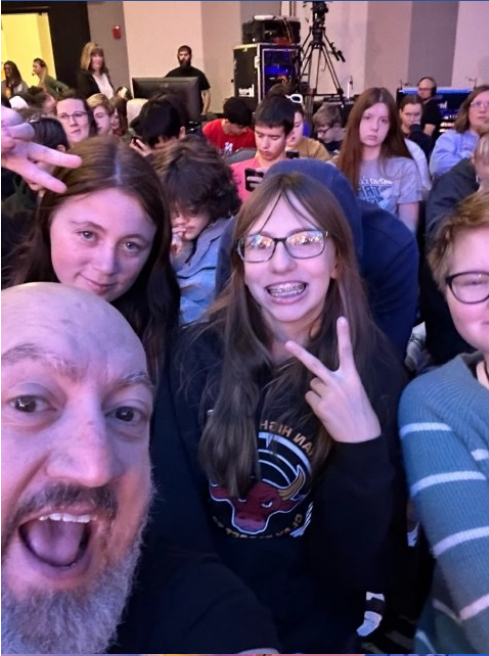
Ash Wednesday will be February 14 this year and this marks the beginning of our 6 weeks of Lent with midweek services and MEALS. Meals will be at 5:00 pm. In order to have these meals, we need groups willing to serve them. A "group" can be an organized church group or simply a group of friends working together. Please consider this in the coming weeks and contact the church office if you have any questions or to reserve a date to serve.

Lent Services—6:30 pm

| | |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
| February 14 | Ash Wednesday |
| February 21 | Lent Service |
| February 28 | Lent Service |
| March 6 | Lent Service |
| March 13 | Lent Service |
| March 20 | Lent Service |
| March 28 | Maundy Thursday |
| March 29 | Good Friday |
| March 30 | Easter Vigil |
| March 31 | Easter 7:00 am & 9:30 am |



LCMS District Youth Gathering—Kearney, NE 2023



Nebraska may be known for its Runza sandwich and its corn, but from November 17th to 19th it was known by Zion Lutheran Youth Group as a place to learn about our Lord Jesus. The LCMS Nebraska Gathering in Kearney, NE was a variety of learning, study, fellowship and fun!

The theme was 'EXTRAordinary', where the Youth discussed and heard presenters explain how Extraordinary God makes each of us and how He can do Extraordinary things in their lives!

Students focused on sharing, reading, discussing what they learned, and prayer.

They also were asked to serve. Zion Youth teamed up with a group from Beatrice, NE on a servant event to the Central Nebraska Veterans Home, where they played various games and interacted with Veterans and the spouses of Veterans.

The Group had an amazing time with Jesus and their peers in Christ.

The new year looks to be an exciting time for the youth of Zion. 2024 will be full of learning, growth, preparation and fundraising by the Zion Lutheran Youth as they gear up for the LCMS Gathering in July of 2025 in New Orleans.

Now is an exiting time to be a young Christian!

Rob Ewing, High School Youth Leader



You Will Be My Witnesses & LWML News

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“You Will Be My Witnesses”:

Explaining Your Faith to Family and Friends

Second, when disagreements happen between well-meaning Christians about certain issues, it's important that we know why we believe what we believe and how to explain it in a way that gives glory to God. If we're both committed to following what the Bible teaches, we can have a constructive conversation. The problem is, nowadays many self-proclaimed Christians don't particularly care what the Bible says about a given issue. In either case, though, it's always important to understand where the other person is coming from, and to be able to give a thoughtful, easy-to-understand explanation of what we believe.

If you are interested in learning more about how to talk about your faith with family, friends, or co-workers who have different beliefs, you can learn more by coming to the new study “You Will Be My Witnesses” starting January 7 between services, where we will be going through the seven main aspects of explaining our faith. Even if you don't normally come to Sunday morning study, this is the perfect opportunity to start! We pray that you will be equipped to be a bold and faithful witness of all that God has done!

In Christ,

Vicar Wessel

LWML NEWS

Dorcas Circle will meet the first Thursday of the month in the upper room at 7pm. Lydia Circle will be taking the months of January, February and March off. Please join us for bible study and lively discussion.

Lydia Circle continue to sell cards in the new narthex.

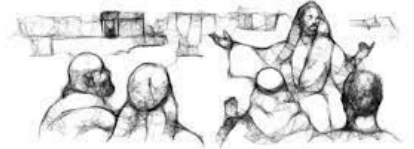
Dorcas Circle adopted 8 post secondary students with gift bags for finals week.

Lydia Circle challenged Dorcas Circle for building fund. Just over \$1,200.00 was collected. Great job ladies!

Thank you to all who set up and take down the Christmas trees this year. Also, thank you to Altar Guild who put up the wreaths and angels. An amazing group of volunteers make short work of decorating our church for the holidays.

Joy Schley

You Will Be My Witnesses



Dorcas Circle

Upcoming Meetings

January 4—7:00 p.m.

Topic Leader Joy

Hostess Paula

February 1—7:00 p.m.

Topic Leader Christine

SD District Men's Retreat - Brookings, SD



**"To Be Bold...
and Build One
Another Up"**

1 Thessalonians 5:8-11



Thank you to Adam Schulz
for the pictures!

On December 1st and 2nd, ten men from Zion went up to Brookings to attend a men's retreat at Peace Lutheran Church.

The theme of this year's retreat was "To Be Bold and Build One Another Up." - 1 Thessalonians 5:8-11.

The featured speakers were Rev. Tim Rynearson from Peace of Brookings, Redeemer of Flandreau and Zion of White, and John Stiegelmeier, retired SDSU football coach and member of Peace Lutheran Church.

During the retreat, the men enjoyed fellowship and a number of engaging talks about how to be bold Christians as the speakers encouraged the men to live out their faith in their day-to-day lives.

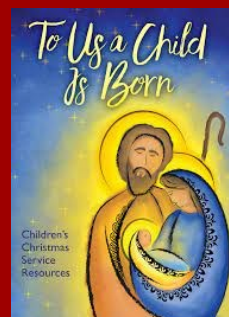
After the retreat, they were able to cheer on the Jackrabbits in a playoff game.



Children's Christmas Program & Hymn Sing

The Children's
Christmas Program and
the Hymn Sing
were held on
December 17

Thank you to
all involved!



Those Serving in January

Thank you!

Both acolytes and ushers are important to helping our worship services run smoothly.

Please take a moment to check the schedule and if you are not able to serve on the day you are scheduled, please contact someone to be your replacement.

Thank you to everyone who steps up to serve our congregation in this way!



| Epiphany Service | Jan 6 - 6:30pm | |
|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Crucifer | *Volunteer Needed* | |
| Head Usher | Travis Schnabel | |
| Ushers | Chris Wehrmann | |
| | Marvin Strand | |
| | Larry Titze | |
| Acolyte | Eli Konrad | |
| | Jan 7 - 8am | Jan 7 - 10:30am |
| Head Usher | Marvin Strand | Travis Schnabel |
| Ushers | Bryan Flanagan | Dave Schmidt |
| | Zach Flanagan | Carl Bode |
| | Nathan Flanagan | Rob Ewing |
| Acolytes | Charlie Patzer | Malachi Hagemann |
| | Grayson Van Oort | Lydia Smith |
| | Jan 14 - 8am | Jan 14 - 10:30am |
| Head Usher | Russ Whaley | Loren Brech |
| Ushers | Chris Wehrmann | Larry Weigandt |
| | Jeff Schuldt | Rod Neugebauer |
| | Chris Fischer | Dave Buchmann |
| Acolytes | Haylen Buchholtz | Christian Foster |
| | Jonah Iburg | Carla Keiper |
| | Jan 21 - 8am | Jan 21 - 10:30am |
| Head Usher | Marvin Strand | Adam Popp |
| Ushers | Josh Schultz | Carter Popp |
| | Larry Stolz | Chad Popp |
| | Adam Schulz | John Fink |
| Acolytes | Isaac Fischer | John Keenan |
| | | Sydney Keenan |
| | Jan 28 - 8am | Jan 28 - 10:30am |
| Head Usher | Chris Wehrmann | Travis Schnabel |
| Ushers | Frank Luczak | Chris Foster |
| | Frank Luczak Jr. | Alex Foster |
| | Chris Fischer | Larry Schnabel |
| Acolytes | Levi Hinker | Noah Schnabel |
| | Maci Wudel | Lucy Thompson |

Kids for Christ

We would like to thank Rob & Karen Ewing for teaching us how to paint a Christmas picture! We really appreciate you volunteering your time to help us out.

January KFC
ICE SKATING
Saturday, January 14
2:00–3:30



KFC is for all kids grades 3-8.

Even if you've never come to KFC, now's the time to come for an afternoon of fun!



Thank you Erin Amick for the pictures!

Family Night—December 3

FAMILY CHRISTMAS NIGHT, 2023

I'm so glad Zion has this opportunity to come together as a "church family" to celebrate Christmas. It all starts out with a pot-luck meal that never disappoints. With the help of the Stewardship Committee & many willing hands, we had an excellent turnout of around 80 people.

The evening of sharing Christmas together, the visiting and laughter, the awesome hot cocoa station & cookie decorating, the yummy food, and talent show would not be possible without the following volunteers. Heartfelt thanks to all the following:

Our kitchen helpers (Edie, Linda, Jean, & Joyce), Josh & Amber, Gwen & Kendra, John, Tracy, and Bryan, Rob & Karen, Russ & Loren, Adam S., Adam G., Lindsay & Jenny, & Zion's youth group.

In order to keep this "unique tradition" going in the future, don't hesitate to volunteer your time & talents. The Lord blesses us immensely, so let's give back to Him joyfully!

Hope to see you next year! God Bless!

Lois B.



Thank you to Adam for the pictures.

January 2024



| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|------------------------------|
| 31 8am Divine Service 9:15am Adult Bible Study & Sunday School for K-1 10:30am Divine Service | 1 New Year's Day Offices Closed | 2 7:30am Women's Bible Study 9:30am Staff Mtg | 3 1pm COFFEE Bible Study 6:30pm Board of Education | 4 7am Men's Bible Study 4pm Building Committee | 5 Office Closed Pastor/Vicar's Day Off | 6 6:30pm Epiphany Service |
| 7 8am Divine Service 9:15am Adult Bible Study & Sunday School for K-1 10:30am Divine Service | 8 9:30am Staff Mtg | 9 7:30am Women's Bible Study | 10 1pm COFFEE Bible Study 6pm Faith Foundations 7:30pm Elder Mtg | 11 7am Men's Bible Study | 12 Office Closed Pastor/Vicar's Day Off | 13 9am CPR Class |
| 14 8am Divine Service 9:15am Adult Bible Study & Sunday School for K-1 10:30am Divine Service | 15 9:30am Staff Mtg 1pm Quilting | 16 7:30am Women's Bible Study 7pm Regular Voters Meeting | 17 1pm COFFEE Bible Study 6pm Faith Foundations 7:30pm Council Mtg | 18 Newsletter Articles Due 7am Men's Bible Study 4pm Building Committee | 19 Office Closed Pastor/Vicar's Day Off | 20 |
| 21 8am Divine Service 9:15am Adult Bible Study & Sunday School for K-1 10:30am Divine Service 6:30pm Music/Movie Night | 22 9:30am Staff Mtg 2pm Service @ Countryside 4pm Service @ Wesley Acres | 23 7:30am Women's Bible Study 8:45am Newsletter Assembly | 24 1pm COFFEE Bible Study 6pm Faith Foundations | 25 7am Men's Bible Study | 26 Office Closed Pastor/Vicar's Day Off | 27 |
| 28 8am Divine Service 9:15am Adult Bible Study & Sunday School for K-1 10:30am Divine Service | 29 9:30am Staff Mtg | 30 7:30am Women's Bible Study | 31 1pm COFFEE Bible Study 6pm Faith Foundations | 1 | 2 | 3 |



Nov - Dec 2023

SERVING THE LORD IN

Japan

News from
Pastor Dan and Joan Jastram

<https://www.lcms.org/jastram>



Pastor Dan and Joan Jastram

Rev. Jastram serves as the
Asia Lutheran Resource
Coordinator:

*Making Lutheran resources of
theology and worship
available in Asia.*



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daniel.jastram@lcms.org

with the word ADD or REMOVE
in the subject line.

Here's our newsletter archive link:

<https://bit.ly/3Xkd9W8>

Link to join our mailing list:

<https://tinyurl.com/47vyhnae>

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New Acquaintance

The most exciting development recently came through new acquaintance with another confessional Lutheran pastor and congregation — Rev. Haga and Megumi (Grace) Lutheran Church in Mito, Ibaraki Prefecture, 3 hours north of us.



**Mito New Acquaintances: Jastram with
Rev. Haga, S. Brandt, A. Schuette**

After hearing of Rev. Haga's interest in meeting me, I gathered information about his Lutheran Evangelical Christian Church (LECC) background; namely, the fruits of Japan mission efforts started in 1952 by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) and carried on by 18 WELS missionaries and others over 63 years, resulting in a fully independent, self-governing and self-supported church body recognized as sister church body with WELS and a member of the worldwide Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) fellowship.

In its genesis, the LECC has also benefited from Japan missionaries with LCMS connections. It is a small church body boldly addressing current ministry challenges with God-given resources of three national pastors and six congregations in a region particularly known for resistance to foreign influences—even those of Buddhism established in Japan thirteen centuries ago!

The Mito worship service focused squarely on God's Advent Word of promise: "he [the Savior] will crush your [Satan's] head" (Genesis 3:15).

After worship we enjoyed extended conversations with both English speaking members as well as with those more comfortable in Japanese.

The Mito congregation pursues community outreach using English classes with gospel messages taught by WELS Kingdom Workers and Friendship Network church workers as well as by using online streaming of worship services and website content for church resources.

This wonderful new acquaintance came about through previous interactions with Rev. Haga's LECC colleague, Rev. Nakamoto in the Tokyo area, who has also treated me very warmly in our visits.

All these interactions have gone extremely well. We have acquired greater understanding of common resource needs, greater motivation to maintain communication, and greater eagerness to coordinate future planning.



Mito church elders

Prayer and Thanksgiving:

- thanksgiving for the new acquaintance of Rev. Haga and Megumi (Grace) Luth. Ch. in Mito, for their energetic outreach efforts, and for future opportunities of interaction;
- thanksgiving for the official church relations Japan visit by Dr. Shaw with Dr. Yoshimura and Rev. Wakabayashi;
- thanksgiving for lively ministry connections through the Derendinger family;
- thanksgiving for McFerrin family members visiting from the States;
- prayers for American expats at a distance from Tokyo who desire closer connection with LCMS teaching and practice;
- prayers for our LCMS Asia missionary family gathering coming up in January, for times of renewed learning and friendships among colleagues;
- thanksgiving for wonderful headway on our translation project of Engelbrecht, *The Lutheran Difference* (CPH 2014) (about 30% completed);
- thanksgiving for God's continual blessings at our three worship sites: Shinjuku, Yokosuka, Okinawa;
- thanksgiving for our LCMS Asia regional director Rev. Charles Ferry and fellow LCMS Asia missionaries each with individual challenges and blessings;
- thanksgiving for the faithful prayers and support provided by our LCMS Jastram-Asia mission partners and our St. Louis headquarters.

To support this LCMS mission work:

Give securely online through the LCMS page:

lcms.org/givenow/jastram

Rev. Yoshimura & Rev. Shaw



Ministry Contacts

What a wonderful blessing it was to welcome Rev. Dr. Jonathan Shaw on his recent official visit to Japan as he became better acquainted with newly ordained Rev. Dr. Hiroaki Yoshimura!

Although the LCMS is not in fellowship with the state-established Ev. Luth. Ch. of Finland, nor with its

Ripple effect, from Grace Lutheran Church in Versailles MO to Tokyo Japan. Following the Derendinger family's visit to Tokyo reported in the last newsletter, we received in the mail a wonderful gift of the *Liturgy Accompaniment Edition* of the Lutheran Service Book! Not only that, but pastor Rev. Rottmann contacted us about the possibility of adorning our Eucharistic service with sacramental vessels more noble than our current, travel-scarred, well-used and generations-old, "circuit-rider" diminutive set. Thank you!

Jastrams & Derendinger Family



YOUR SUPPORT is vital for our continued mission work in Japan: regular services at our worship sites, translation of theological resources, and nurturing relations with local Lutheran pastors facing individual challenges to the faith. We are humbly grateful for your continued prayers and support. **Thank you!**

Your missionaries, Dan and Joan Jastram

"Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you"

(Matt. 11:10b, Third Sunday in Advent, Liturgical Verse).

several mission associations, we do wish to keep in touch with confessionally-minded entities and efforts which boldly face the challenge of divergent teachings and practices. We willingly share the joy of kindred spirits where we can!

Similarly, we rejoice in the communion fellowship we do share with Rev. & Mrs. Wakabayashi, and our LCMS sister congregation in Kobari Niigata. ♦

Jastram & Shaw; Rev. & Mrs. Wakabayashi



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