

September 14, 2023

# Zion Connection

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[Zion Website](#) | [Facebook](#)

*The Altar flowers for the month of September are graciously provided by Ann Schultz in loving memory of her husband, Rick Schultz.*

## Welcome

Welcome to Zion Lutheran Church! Our newsletter serves to help you stay connected -

With one another, with your faith, with the greater church, and with opportunities to serve our community & beyond.



## Article from Pastor Karin

### An Earthly Story with a Heavenly Meaning

*Then Jesus told them many things in parables, saying... Matthew 13:3.*

Dozens of Jesus' parables are recorded in the Scriptures. How many of them can you name? Do you have a favorite? Which is the most challenging one for you?

Some of Jesus' parables are *The Parable of the Sower*, *The Parable of the Weeds*, *The Parable of the Hidden Treasure*, *The Parable of the Pearl of Great Value*, and *The Parable of the Net*. These, and all the parables Jesus told, may be thought of as earthly stories with heavenly meanings.

The Pharisees who rejected Jesus could easily dismiss His parables as irrelevant. Jesus said their closed eyes and calloused hearts prevented them from understanding His earthly stories with their heavenly meanings. But Jesus told His disciples that through his parables **the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven** would be given to them.

Thanks be to God that the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven continues to be poured out upon the Church through the parables of Jesus. The Holy Spirit continues to open the eyes and hearts of the Baptized to learn from Jesus and His parables. Christians around the world discover and rediscover spiritual, religious, and moral truth from Jesus' earthly stories with their heavenly meanings.

May God, through His Holy Word including the parables of our Lord, daily feed and nurture your faith in Christ as your Teacher of wisdom, Savior from sin, Victor over death, and Hope for eternity.

### CHURCH CALENDAR

#### WEEKLY WORSHIP SERVICE

11 AM on Sunday, in person and via  
livestream @ [LINK](#)

#### PASTOR KARIN'S OFFICE HOURS & CONTACT

Tuesday and Thursday,  
9:00 AM-11:00 AM at Shepherd of the Hills

TEXT: (240)-285-5454

EMAIL: [revkmalbaugh@gmail.com](mailto:revkmalbaugh@gmail.com)

#### MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST

Mondays, 8:30 AM at [Rainbow](#)

#### MAH JONGG FELLOWSHIP

Fridays, 1:00 PM-3:00 PM

#### COUNCIL MEETING

Sunday, Sept. 17<sup>th</sup> following worship

# Announcements

- Save the date - Zion Picnic October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 at **Lake David Park, Groveland**. Further information will be forthcoming.
- **WELCA**- The September meeting and Bible Study are cancelled. Both events will resume in October.
- On Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>, The Interfaith Council of Lake County Presentation of: The Faith Club: A Muslim, A Christian, A Jew. Three women search for understanding. To be hosted by Women in Mission at Living Hope Church in the social hall. **950 Seventh Street, Clermont, FL 34711**. You must RSVP by Sept. 14<sup>th</sup>. If you're interested in attending, please notify Pat McCurdy before Sept. 14<sup>th</sup>. Pastor Karin will be participating in the program.
- **WELCA**- Fall Gathering will be held Nov. 10-12 at the Warren Willis United Methodist Conference Center. **4991 Picciola Road, Fruitland Park, FL 34731**. Overnight, commuter, and workshop registrations available [here](#) - NOTE: Our own Diane Brown will be presenting a workshop on the Women's Jail Ministry. Bible study will be led by Sister Michelle Collins.



## September Birthdays

- Sept. 7<sup>th</sup>, Rae Starke
- Sept. 21<sup>st</sup>, Ruth Stoyer
- Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup>, Penny Slifer

# Sunday Scripture Readings



## Sunday, Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>

*(16th Sunday after Pentecost)*

Genesis 50:15-21

Psalms [1-7] 8-13

Romans 14:1-12

Matthew 18:21-35

## Sunday, Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>

*(17th Sunday after Pentecost)*

Jonah 3:10-4:11

Psalms 145:1-8

Philippians 1:21-20

Matthew 20:1-16

## Sunday, Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>

*(18th Sunday after Pentecost)*

Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

Psalms 25:1-9

Philippians 2:1-13

Matthew 21:23-32

## Sunday, Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>

*(19th Sunday after Pentecost)*

Deuteronomy 8:7-18

Psalms 65

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

Luke 17:11-19

# Community Activities

**School Supplies** - Thanks to your generous donations and the support of Thrivent, Zion provided school supplies and uniform shirts to the Mascotte Charter School. (See first two images)

**Sleep in Heavenly Peace (SHP)** - On Saturday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 80 people gathered at the Clermont Lowe's to build 66 beds for Central Florida children. 16 of these have already been committed to families in our local area and will be delivered within the next month. Rich and Karen McCamant and Susan Skyzinski participated in the build. Thanks to Zion and Thrivent for their support. Your generous donations provided bedding for the children. (See last two images)

**Read to Sydney** - There's still time to donate books or funds for the distribution box at The Neighborhood Center.

**Volunteer opportunities available** - As summer winds down and more of us are available on a regular basis, there are some necessary duties to keep Zion moving forward. Whether you want to work on any of these as an individual, or with several friends, please consider donating your time and talents for one or more of these items. If the current list doesn't speak to you, no worries, we will be sharing another list in the next newsletter.

Please reach out to any council member for details:

- to oversee 2024 monthly calendar/donations for altar flowers.
- to create Zion prayer list as needed.
- to prepare communion prior to Sunday services.
- to assist WELCA with monthly programs and bible study.
- to print 6 large-print photocopies of the weekly Celebrate.
- to deliver food donations to The Neighborhood Center as needed.

Many of you already share your time for the sake of Zion and we are grateful. We hope you will feel called to increase your opportunities to serve.





# Church Finances

As requested by the congregation earlier this year, Zion's full monthly Treasurer's Report is being posted on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall. Each month, highlights of the report will be listed below.

On the next page, you will find a letter from Mike Harrass regarding the subject.

	August 2023	YTD
Income	\$4,706.00	\$50,634.00
Expenses	\$6,429.54	\$52,337.38
Total	(-\$1,723.54)	(-\$1,703.38)

## NOTE:

Moving forward, announcements, prayer requests, and praise reports will be shared prior to the beginning of Sunday's service. These will be followed by the prelude and the lighting of the candles, offering a chance to quietly prepare for worship before the Order for Confession and Forgiveness.

*For any help with newsletter information, or to share something you'd like included, please reach out to Kassidi via email at [KassidiSikes@gmail.com](mailto:KassidiSikes@gmail.com). Thanks!*

As you will notice in the Treasurer's report posted in the fellowship hall, Zion's financial situation at present is not good. It is not dire, but is in the negative, and we want everyone to be aware of the situation. After a couple of years of exceeding our budget, the 2023 numbers indicate our expenses exceed our current income. Many of our expenses reflect maintenance and repair of our church and parsonage buildings. New A/C units, new well water pumps, bathroom repair, roof repair, all have contributed to high expenses. We need to express our thanks to John Renn for dealing with these repairs (and often doing them himself).

The support of Zion members has been astonishing over the years. However, we have to recognize that there are fewer of us, so our individual contributions are trying to cover a larger amount of the budget. I'm sure that we are considering how to increase our financial support as individuals if we can. To each of you, thank you.

We shouldn't lose sight of the bigger picture, however. Jesus didn't call on us to make a profit, or to break even. Zion in Groveland has been, and will keep on, serving our Lord. We have an active membership, doing all kinds of things to serve our community. We have a Pastor to guide us, we have financial and physical assets to work with, and we have a promise that our Lord is present, wherever two or three are gathered in His name. We exceed that number (but it'd be nice to have a few more).

There may be clouds over our financial picture, and there have been a few lightning strikes coming uncomfortably close. But, living in Florida, we know that clouds will pass, and things will change. I hope that our difficulties will pass quickly and look forward to being in ministry with you all.

Peace,  
Mike Harrass