



ST. PAUL-ZION DUAL PARISH

DECEMBER 2025

A Few Thoughts from Pastor Holle

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way ...

Matthew 1:18

... the angel Gabriel was sent from God ... to Mary. And he ... said, "... you will conceive ... and bear a son, ... Jesus." And Mary said ..., "How ... I am a virgin?"

Luke 1:26-28,31, 34

... an angel ... appeared to [Joseph] ... saying, "... that which is conceived in [Mary] is from the Holy Spirit." Matthew 1:20

And while they were [in Bethlehem] ... [Mary] gave birth to her firstborn Son ... and laid Him in a manger ... And ... there were shepherds ... And an angel ... (who) said ..., "...unto you is born ... a Savior ..."

Luke 2:6-11

... after Jesus was born ..., wise men ... came ... they saw the star ... And going into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshiped Him.

Matthew 2:1, 10-11



There's just so much -- Mary, Joseph, shepherds, angels, wise men, a star, and of course, the Baby. The scene will shift from Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem; from the East to Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and eventually even Egypt for a time. Only Matthew and Luke provide details of our Lord's conception & birth, and though their "Christmas" accounts take up just part of four chapters and just over 50 verses of the New Testament, it is still among the most beloved and well-known parts of the story of God's plan for the salvation of mankind. It's a story little children often help tell, but it's significance means we must take care not to trivialize or unduly "romanticize" it.

And by way of comparison ... the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John) use almost 30 chapters (& approximately 1,200 verses) to describe and record the events of Holy Week and Easter. Is it any wonder the Church has historically been anchored and rooted in the passion, death, and resurrection of our Lord. The accounts of His birth and passion (& resurrection) are important, but we must never lose sight of why the Baby was sent, why He came, and what it all means for sinful mankind. Amidst all the hustle and bustle of our modern "holiday season," the cooking, cleaning, gifts, travel, and vacations, **let's keep Jesus front and center**, for He came to save His people from their sins ... and by grace we know and appreciate what that meant – a cross.

continued to next page...

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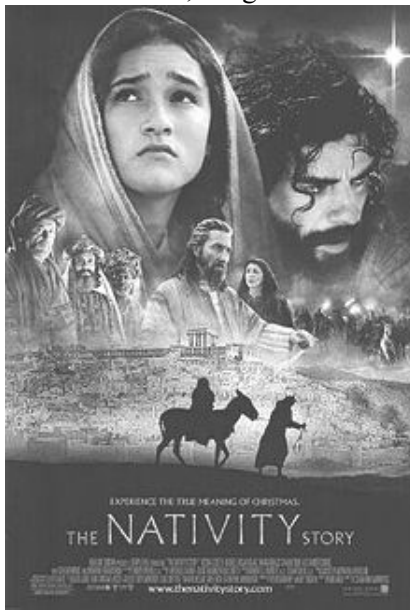
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Hours:
8:00am-1:00pm
Tuesday & Thursday
Closed Friday

Now some of you may be wondering about me including the wise men (& star) as part of the “Christmas” story. Traditionally, the story of the magi from the East marks the beginning of Epiphany on January 6, just **after the 12 days of Christmas**. But what’s a nativity scene without a star or camels, gifts, and wise men? And if we Christians keep all our Christmas decorations (& nativity scenes) out past the end of the busy shopping season that now starts well in advance of Thanksgiving each year, well our neighbors and friends might think we’re nuts; we’d be out of step with the way the world celebrates Christmas ... and oh (*sarcasm mode turned on*), wouldn’t that be “terrible.”

Now I’ve always liked nativity scenes, and I hope this doesn’t come as too much of a shock for any of you, but the traditional nativity (or manger) scene that we sometimes see adorning yards and homes this time of year probably isn’t a completely faithful reproduction of the scene that first Christmas. The shepherds and wise men probably didn’t mingle outside a stable, and there’s no reason to think that an angel (or angels) were to be seen above the place our Lord was born. The shepherds seem unaware of any star that might have marked the Christ Child’s birth, and the Bible says that it guided the wise men to *the house* where Mary and the baby Jesus were living.

And yet, all these treasured images are associated, in one way or another, with the birth of the long-promised Savior. And so, we gather them together in a simple way to remind us, and focus us, on the night our Lord was born. Not the night He first became one of us, for that happened months earlier at the moment of His conception, but on the night He was born and on the days, weeks, and months that followed when God Himself lived among us in the flesh.



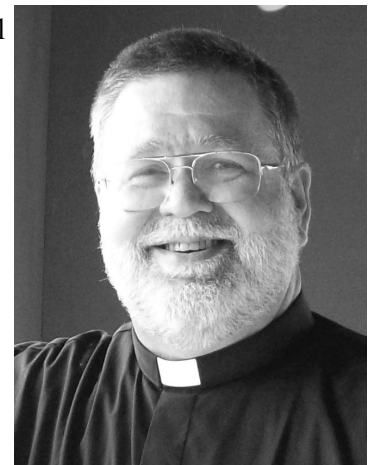
A number of years ago a feature length movie, *The Nativity Story*, was released in theaters across the country. As I recall, Becky and I went to see the movie together. The film seeks to tell the story of our Savior’s conception and birth, and it does so in a way that effectively recreates the traditional nativity scene so often seen on cards (or in yards) of Christians this time of year. While the film makers do take a measure of literary license with some of the details of the story, the film itself offers a “new” way of thinking about and recalling this very familiar story. The angel appearing to Mary and Joseph, their trip to Bethlehem, the shepherds, the star, the wise men ... it’s all there in *The Nativity Story* ... and the characters aren’t just kids wearing bath robes.

On Friday, December 19, beginning at 6 pm, we’ll be showing this film here at Zion. Everyone is welcome and you may certainly bring and/or invite neighbors and friends. If you’d like to bring some movie-time or holiday snacks and drinks, possibly even to share, that would be fine. The night is planned simply to give everyone the opportunity to hear once again the story of our Lord’s birth in a way that will engage our visual as well as auditory senses. In a way, *The Nativity Story* brings to life this incredible and unparalleled story in the same way Mel Gibson’s *The Passion* helped many to better appreciate and understand our Lord’s passion.

If your evening isn’t already “booked” for the 19th, I hope you’ll join us for an early-winter movie night. I suspect it will be roughly an hour and forty minutes well spent near the end of this Advent season.

He came ... He comes ... and yes, He will come again. Amen

Pastor Holle





HOLIDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

JOINT Thanksgiving Eve Service –

Nov. 26 at Zion - 7:00pm

*Joint Advent 1 - Wednesday, December 3
at St. Paul - 7:00pm*

*Joint Advent 2 - Wednesday, December 10
at Zion - 7:00pm*

*Joint Advent 3 – December 17
at St. Paul - 7:00pm*

Christmas Eve Services, December 24

Zion - 5:00pm

St. Paul - 7:00pm

*Joint Christmas Day services
will be held at Zion – 10:00am*

*Joint New Year's Eve service
will be held at St. Paul starting at 7:00pm*



FAIRVIEW LIGHTS UP

***St. Paul Lutheran Church Evangelism &
Outreach Committee***

***will be hosting a display
at the Fairview Community Building
on December 11th.***

This will be from 6:00pm-8:00pm.

***Arch books will be
given out to families with children.
If questions, please contact Sadie Meyer
at 785-288-8223.***

CHRISTMAS CANTATA

*The choir of Zion Lutheran Church, Everest,
along with several members of the community,
would like to invite you to the performance
of the beautiful Christmas Cantata,*

Hallelujah, Jesus Is Born

*The cantata will be at 2:00pm on Sunday, December 14th,
at Zion Lutheran Church, 1521 Prairie Road, Everest.*



Stewardship



Pointing to the Rock of Ages

*Not the labor of my hands Can fulfill Thy Law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know, Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone; Thou must save, and Thou alone.*
(LSB 761:2)

While the classic hymn “Rock of Ages” shows up in the Lutheran Service Book in the “Hope and Comfort” section, it can also teach us a valuable lesson about Christian stewardship. If that surprises you, stay with me on this one.

No Lutheran would ever dispute the fact that our work does not save us. Ephesians 2 makes it clear that we are dead in our trespasses and sins and would remain in that state until Christ raises us by grace. There is not a ladder on which we can climb out of the grave that our sins have dug for us. No blood, sweat nor tears will be able to rescue us. We all know this.

Our works do not save. Christ’s work on the cross of Calvary does! He bore human flesh. He carried the burden of our sin to the cross. His body was beaten, bruised and bloodied for us. He has indeed atoned for us! This is more than enough reason for this hymn to be bouncing around in your head all day today!

But our work has a place. The place is in response to what the Father has done for us in Jesus. The Rock of Ages, who is Jesus, becomes the foundation on which our lives of faith are built. The Holy Spirit uses the means of grace to make us God’s workmanship that Paul talks about in Ephesians 2:10.

Our workmanship does not display our power or prowess. Like the heavens declare the handiwork of the Creator, the works of a redeemed sinner point others to the salvation that is worked only by Jesus alone. Our work is a response to and reflection of a grace and glory that we ourselves could never accomplish or achieve.

We become stewards of the treasure that is the Gospel. When we faithfully support the work of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with our financial support, we are doing the work which points to the One who alone atones. When we come alongside a struggling sister or brother for whom Christ died and we share the stewardship work of compassion and care, we enfold the treasure of God’s love and redemption. When we make it a weekly priority to arrange our schedule to be in the Lord’s House with other stewards of the Gospel to receive again and again the Gospel’s precious gift, we are stewards of the Body of Christ in the congregation that points even more people to Jesus.

We cannot do this. Jesus does it through us. We are simply stewards of this precious treasure!

ZION LUTHERAN WOMENS MISSIONARY LEAGUE
Zion Lutheran Church, Hiawatha, Kansas 66434

The regular meeting of the Zion Lutheran Women's Missionary League was called to order on November 11 with 4 members present. The meeting was called to order by Lela Middendorf. A devotion entitled, Approach With Confidence, was shared.

The minutes of the October meeting were read and approved as well as the Treasurer's Report.


Anne read a thank you from Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch for our donation this year. Goodie Bags for our shut-ins will be prepared at the December 9 meeting.

It was noted that we are not serving a meal prior to Advent services this fall. We discussed the Christmas donations to Pastor and St. Louis Seminary Food Bank.

Anne announced that the church will be decorated for Christmas on Saturday, November 29, at 2:00 pm.

The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer and adjourned.

Anne Arnesen, Secretary

A black silhouette illustration of a nativity scene set against a grey and white checkerboard background. The scene includes a stable with Mary and Joseph, the infant Jesus in a manger, two oxen, two camels with riders, and a star in the sky.

SPONSORED BY: SOUTH BROWN COUNTY MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION

Free Will Donation Supports SBCMA Ministries

CHRISTMAS LUMINARIES

10 BLOCK DRIVE

1300 CANDLES LIGHT THE WAY

LIVING SCENES OF

CHRIST'S LIFE

33rd PRESENTATION

"FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS"

Junction of Highways 73 & K20 Horton, Kansas

December 7, 2025 5:30—7:00 p.m.

ST. PAUL DORCAS

Our Dorcas group met November 2, 2025 in the church basement after the church service. Kristina Costlow led our third lesson of our Bible study from our workbook, Unshakable by Donna Snow. This was Day 4, “The Sin That So Easily Entangles”.

President Sarah Kleopfer called the meeting to order. Becky Meyer took roll call and there were 14 members present. September minutes were read and approved. Correspondence was a thank you from Orphan Grain Train for our donation to help pay for international shipping costs; a thank you from Lutheran for Life for our donation to go toward equipping Lutherans and their neighbors to be Gospel-motivated voices for Life., flyers from Lutheran Hour and the fall update of Lead a Child, The Messenger, and the fall newsletter from Orphan Grain Train. Becky sent a thank you to Susan Childs for the homemade bags for the school kits. Acting treasurer Sadie Meyer gave the treasurer’s report. No officer reports, no committee reports.

Unfinished business: Steve Manche delivered the 151 school kits, 135 health kits and 21 quilts on October 28 to the Orphan Grain Train Lincoln facility, they were very grateful and in need of them. They are so appreciative of everything and offered to give our Dorcas group a tour and work day when we can make it up to Lincoln, Nebraska—hopefully June 2026.

New business: Elections—the slate of officers will stay the same, as they’ve all been on for two years and they can be on 2 consecutive terms. Our three charities this year will be Haskell LIGHT, Disciples of the Way, and Jackson County Crisis Pregnancy Center. We talked and passed a sign-up sheet around for the 2026 yearbook. Linda Duesing made a motion to pay Karen Bauman for health kit supplies she had purchased, it was seconded and passed. We will be decorating the church for Advent and Christmas on Saturday, November 29th at 6:00pm with pizza to follow. Kathy Heiniger will purchase two poinsettias for the altar.

There was discussion on the Wednesday Advent meals for December 3rd and 17th, and the outcome was to skip doing the meals. We also discussed our plans for the December Dorcas Program which will be Sunday after, December 7th at 2:00pm at Linda Duesing’s house for Christmas snacks and goodies. All ladies from church are invited and to bring a guest to celebrate the Advent season and the birth of Christ with us. Don’t forget to bring your Christmas stocking. Linda also mentioned we will be tying quilts for the last time this year on November 14th at 9:30 in the church basement. We will resume in the new year.

Offering was then collected.

Announcements: December 7th, 2:00pm, Linda Duesing’s house at 304 Shoshone Road in Hiawatha. The program will be by Becky Meyer and hostesses will be the officers. Altar committee for December will be Leslie Brockhoff and Kathy Heiniger.

We closed with the Lord’s Prayer.

Nancy Manche served refreshments of apple and cherry crisp and gingerbread with coffee and water.

Secretary,

Becky Meyer



Joint Thanksgiving Service

***Wednesday evening
November 26th***

***at Zion Lutheran
7:00pm.***



Photo of Nancy, Sarah, and Kathy
at the Kansas District LWML
Christian Life Retreat
that was held Friday, November 7
and Saturday, November 8 in Salina.

Please Update!

If you have a new cell phone number, address, or email address,
please make sure you send it to the office.

You can e-mail the office at office@NEKpartnership.org or call 785-742-3995.

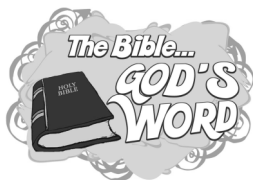
*The office would also like the names and addresses
of any members who are at college. Thank You!*

SUNDAY SCHOOL

We invite all kids to come and join us for Sunday School!
Sunday School meets each Sunday morning at **9:15am at Zion.**
Sunday School at **St. Paul** starts after the service at **9:30am.**
The Zion Adult Bible Class meet on Sunday mornings at 9:15am.



MIDWEEK BIBLE STUDY



Midweek Bible Study meets at 7:00pm on Wednesday nights
and will rotate between St. Paul and Zion. Please join us!

***Pastor Holle has a radio broadcast on KNZA
at approximately 10:05am on Sunday mornings.***



PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS:

Military: Spencer Ernst, Alexander Williams

College: Joey Meyer, Megan Brockhoff, Paige Stover, Gunner Smith, Marcus Hinton.

Care Facilities & Shut-Ins: Carol Bauer, Gene Rice, Esther Krug, Doris Rice, Juanita Fritz.



Also in our prayers: Helen Bauerle, Julie Selland, David Davidson, Doug Barrett, Rachel Spann, Malcolm Gigstad, Tim Bianchi, Jill Kohlmeier, Danny Bauerle, Katie Fry, Jeanne Lowe, Wes Duesing, Aimee Hampl, Carl Mueller.

We Remember the blessed saints who now rest in the Lord and we pray for their families that they remember all who die in the Lord live with the Lord. (Romans 6:5)

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

*Dec 1-Charlotte Kruse, Dec 3-Scott Gigstad, Dec 4-Brian Holle, Dec 6-Jackson Manche,
Dec 7-Diane Davis, Dec 8-Corey Dunaway, Dec 8-Kenny Stephens, Dec 8-Henry Smith,
Dec 12-Jennifer Lowe, Dec 18-Helen Bauerle, Dec 18-Susan Wissmann, Dec 27-Daniel Kruse,
Dec 28-David Middendorf, Dec 30-Anne Arnesen*

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

*Dec 3-Larry & Carol Walter, Dec 4-Janis & Ken Krug, Dec 12-Richard & Barb Shefferd,
Dec 30-David & Lela Middendorf, Dec 31-Chad & Amanda Hinton*

SERVERS FOR DECEMBER

(Please trade if you have a date conflict)

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN

Dec 7th: Kristina Costlow & girls
Dec 14th: Sadie Meyer & Evan Brockhoff
Dec 21st: Dwight & Charlotte Kruse
Dec 28th: Steve & Nancy Manche

Altar Guild for December: Leslie Brockhoff, Kathy Heiniger, Galen Meyer

ZION LUTHERAN

Dec 7th: **Elder**-Scott Gigstad, **Acolyte**-Grace Hampl, **Ushers**-Bob Freese & Larry Walter,
Greeters-Hampl family, **Sound System**-Bob & Virginia Freese
Dec 14th: **Elder**-Leon Wissmann, **Acolyte**-Brady Killman, **Ushers**-Tim Bianchi & Leon Wissmann,
Greeters-Scott & Jessica Gigstad, **Sound System**-David Middendorf
Dec 21st: **Elder**-Travis Hampl, **Acolyte**-Grace Hampl, **Ushers**-David Middendorf & Kurt Killman,
Greeters-Tim & Jackie Bianchi, **Sound System**-Dwight Meyer
Dec 28th: **Elder**-Scott Gigstad, **Acolyte**-Brady Killman, **Ushers**-Bob Freese & Larry Walter,
Greeters-Hampl family, **Sound System**-Leon Wissmann

Altar Guild for December: Anne Arnesen & Debbie Reschke

AHG DECEMBER 2025 NEWS!

*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful PEARLS, who, when he had found one PEARL OF GREAT PRICE, went and sold all that he had and bought it.
(MATTHEW 13:45-46, NKJV)*

It is hard to believe the first half of the AHG Program year is almost over! There are so many precious and PRICELESS memories being made with the help of the Charter. The Troop is so very thankful for a safe place to meet and grow in their faith.

November activities included an Our Flag workshop (held at Zion) and a PiPa field trip to the Sabetha High School performance of The Sound of Music.

Just around the corner are two of the most anticipated events of the year. November 17, the Troop is packing shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. Saturday, December 6, founding member Millie Stoller is hosting a bookish-themed Mother-Daughter Tea party!

Thank you to all who purchased Giving Bean, your support is invaluable! May God bless you and keep you in 2026!



DECEMBER, 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 		2	3 5:30 Confirmation 7:00 Advent Midweek Service @St.Paul	4	5 Pastor Holle Day Off AHG Mother Daughter Tea Party	6
7 2 nd Sunday in Advent 9:15 Bible Study @Zion St. Paul Dorcas @ Linda Duesing's home	8	9 9:00 Circuit @ St. Paul 6:30 Zion LWML	10 5:30 Confirmation 7:00 Advent Midweek Service @Zion	11 6:00-8:00 pm Fairview Lights Up	12 Pastor Holle Day Off	13
14 3 rd Sunday in Advent 9:15 Bible Study @Zion	15 Articles Due for Newsletter	16	17 5:30 Confirmation 7:00 Advent Midweek Service @St.Paul	18	19 Pastor Holle Day Off 6:00pm "The Nativity Story" @ Zion	20
21 4 th Sunday in Advent Start of Winter 9:15 Bible Study @Zion	22	23	24 5:00 Christmas Eve Service @ Zion 7:00 Christmas Eve Service @ St. Paul	25 Christmas  10:00 Christmas Day Service @ Zion	26 Pastor Holle Day Off	27
28 1 st Sunday after Christmas 9:15 Bible Study @Zion St. Paul Fellowship	29	30	31 7:00 New Year's Eve Service @St.Paul			