

Zion Lutheran Church
439 3rd Avenue South
Clinton, Iowa 52732
Phone 563-242-7391

Vol. 96 No. 2

THE

COURIER

February 2026

A Message from Pastor Barbara

Greetings dear siblings in Christ,

It seems we jump from Advent directly into Lent. We've hardly had a chance to catch our corporate breath. Ahh, but here we go.

Lent feels like a somber season. It begins with a harsh reminder of our mortality. "Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return." And Lenten hymns, mostly sung in a minor key, are quite a switch from the Alleluias of Christmas. (A word, by the way, which is prohibited throughout Lent.)

The 40 days of Lent remind us of the 40 years the Israelites wandered in the desert. Their lack of faith made the journey long and arduous. The Hebrew scriptures are not written as a history book, but rather a narrative of the human journey. Or perhaps more accurately, a narrative of how God joins us on our journey.

Paul writes to the Corinthians "But [God] said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (1 Cor 12:9). Even in the wilderness God's grace provides. "For forty years I led you through the wilderness, yet your clothes and sandals did not wear out" (Deut. 29:5). In this light, Lent becomes a time to embrace our weaknesses so we might more clearly recognize God's grace.

I have found Lent to be a good time to incorporate a practice for watching for God in life. When I wait at a long traffic light, I look for God. When my neighbor insists on a lengthy discussion as I am late for an appointment, I look for God. And yes, even when the nightly news portrays a scary world, I look to find God there.

Let's spend this Lent looking for God. The Ignatian Prayer of Examen, done as one goes to bed, is a wonderful means of helping us to find what God is doing in our journey.

1. Become aware of God's presence. Get into a comfortable position. Let your mind quiet down. Take a deep breath. Become aware of God's presence.

2. Review the day with gratitude. Ask God to reveal all the gifts and graces of the day. Thank God for these gifts.

Continued on next page

3. Pay attention to your emotions. Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What is God saying through these feelings?

4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it. Look at one thing from the day. Pray about it, whether intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.

5. Look toward tomorrow. Ask God to give you light for tomorrow's challenges. Pray for hope.

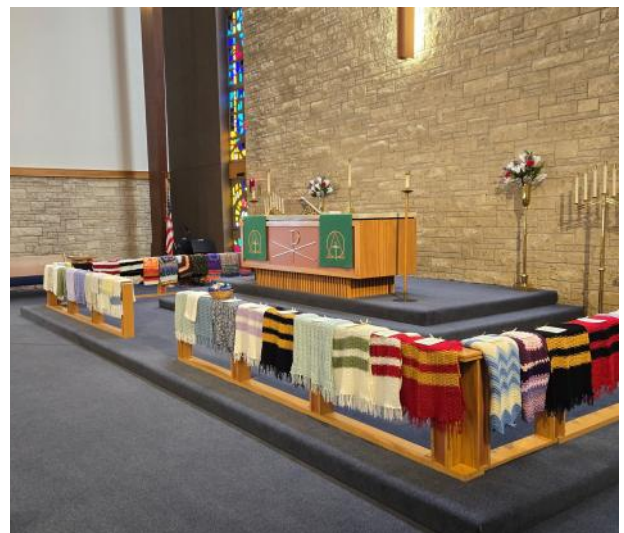
May you find God in unexpected places this Lenten Season.

Pr. Barb

Prayer Shawls & Prayer Squares

During worship services on January 24 & 25, beautiful prayer squares and prayer shawls were draped on the altar rail and were blessed and prepared for giving as a comforting reminder of God's love and Zion's caring, sharing and serving. We thank those who have prayerfully created these shawls and squares: LeAnne Larsen, Patti Lauritzen, Selma Schilling, Pat Steensen, Shirley Wolf and Sylvia Zickau.

The prayer shawls have been packaged and placed in the cabinet in the Library and the prayer squares are in a basket in the Narthex. Feel free to give a Zion prayer shawl or square to someone you know who may have a special need. If you are interested in becoming involved, or learning more about this ministry, please contact Deb Vath at 563-243-5333.



Zion Child Care & Preschool

Happy New Year!!

Preschool started the new year with having Special Person Day! The kiddos got to bring a family member or friend to preschool for part of the day. It's a fun and busy day!! I think our guests are impressed with all of the things that the kids can do!

This month we focused on the color blue and the shape rectangle throughout the building.



Our 3's preschool classes started to learn The Pledge of Allegiance. We also add a red dot to their right hand so they know which hand they need to use to cover their heart. They will have it down in no time!!



We had lots of projects about snow, snowflakes, penguins and all things winter!!

We are ready for warmer days ahead when we can get outside and use the playground again!

Kelly Bork, Director

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Worship services are:

Saturdays	5:30 pm
Sundays	9:00 am

Mid-week Lenten services are: Wednesdays from February 18th - March 25th at 11:00 am & 7:00 pm

Video services are offered via Facebook (www.facebook.com/zionlutheranchurchclinton) **and posted on Zion's website** (www.zionlutheranclinton.org) on Monday.

Our Sunday morning radio broadcast is on KROS, 105.9 FM and 1340 AM, Sunday mornings at 10:30 am.

PUT GOOD INTO THE WORLD

BLOOD DRIVE



Zion Lutheran Church

Monday, February 16th

3:00pm to 6:30pm

The Gathering Space



To sign up, scan the QR code, contact Deb Vath
at djvath@mchsi.com or visit us online @
www.bloodcenter.org - Group # 2827

Last date to donate elsewhere: 12/22/2025

Faith Foundations

The Faith FUNdations children have been busy learning.

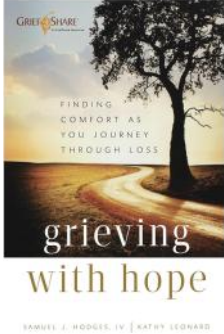
The month of February we will be talking about the Four Friends.

A reminder that we will have Faith FUNdations on Ash Wednesday, February 18th but will be letting the children leave at 6:45pm. Please plan to pick your children up during Lent at 6:45pm in the auditorium so that those that wish to attend Wednesday night services are able to.



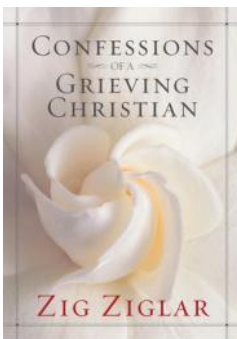
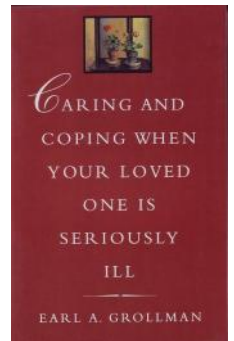
Library News

Happy New Year! Reading more this year? Here's your to do list: Our new books for our Library!



Grieving with Hope written by Hodges and Leonard. Its a Christian guide that helps readers understand grief as a personal, non-linear journey. It offers biblical encouragement and practical insight, showing how faith in God can bring comfort, healing, and hope even in the midst of deep loss.

Caring and Coping When your Loved One is Seriously Ill written by Earl A. Grollman offers compassionate guidance for caregivers , helping them support a seriously ill loved one while managing their own emotions. The book emphasizes communication, emotional understanding, and self-care during a difficult and stressful time.



Confessions of a Grieving Christian by Zig Ziglar is a personal faith based book in which the author describes his own experience grieving the death of his oldest daughter, Susan, from a serious illness. Drawing from his journey through pain, sorrow, and questions about life and loss. He shares how his Christian faith helped him process grief, finding comfort in God, and continue living with hope. the book offers encouragement to others facing loss, blending honest reflection with spiritual insight and practical encouragement to trust God's peace even in deep sorrow.

Thank you for you donation to our library

Book Club Book

On January 21 we started reading a short little book called **Missing Emily: Croatian Life Letters** written by Jodie Toohey. its a novel told between two girls Ami, an American grieving the sudden death of her cousin Emily, begins corresponding with Nada, a girl living in Croatia during the outbreak of war. As they share their lives, the girls form a deep friendship that helps Ami cope with the loss and helps both find hope amid grief, fear, and change.

Books are on the cart, Join us the 3rd Wednesday of each month for discussion.



Midweek Lenten Services

Luther's Small Catechism

LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM will be the focus for our Midweek Lenten services this year. Each week, beginning on Ash Wednesday, February 18, and ending on Maundy Thursday, April 2, Pastor Paul Holmer will lead us in a look at one of the parts of Luther's Small Catechism – Ten Commandments, Lord's Prayer, Apostles' Creed, Baptism, and Communion – to grow in understanding for a more mature faith.

This follows a tradition that Martin Luther practiced. For years his Lenten sermons focused on these five basic elements of Christian faith and practice. Later, he wrote

the Small Catechism as a concise expression of those many years of teaching and preaching.

Services will be held at 11:00 am and 7:00 pm, each Wednesday, February 18 – March 25, and on Thursday, April 2. It should be a good way to mature in faith and grow for Christian living. Join in each week in Lent.

School Supply Shower

The Social Ministry Committee is sponsoring our annual School Supply Shower for Jefferson Elementary School, which will be ongoing now through February 4th. Plastic totes are available in the Narthex until then for your donations. Jefferson requests the following items:

Kleenex

Markers

3 x 5 index cards

Quart size Ziploc bags

Expo markers

#2 pencils

Crayons

School size scissors

Wide ruled paper.

After February 4th, we will deliver the items to Jefferson. As always, we thank you for caring, sharing and serving.



PLEASE Support Our Local Food Pantry!!!

The increased need at the IRAS Food Pantry has put a considerable strain on their ability to fill food boxes. Would you please consider using the "Food Pantry" envelope in your offering envelopes to make a monetary donation AND/OR bring food items for the grocery cart in the Narthex?

Most needed food items:

Boxed Dinners	Canned Meat
Canned Fruit	Canned Vegetables
Cereal	Instant Potatoes
Mac n Cheese	Pancake Mix
Pasta	Pasta Sauce
Peanut Butter	Soup/Ramen



Monthly Birthday Fellowship

February's birthday fellowship in the Gathering Space will be held on Sunday, February 15th, after the 9:00 worship service.

Please join us in the gathering space to honor Zion's members and guests celebrating birthdays in the month of February. Refreshments and cupcakes will be served.

All are welcome!!!



ZION'S PRAYER CHAIN

Did you know Zion has a prayer chain with people who are ready to pray for you? If you, or someone you know, is in need of prayer, please notify the prayer chain by calling Helen Steen at 563-243-2288 or Mary Lou Mallicoat at 563-357-2963. All information is kept confidential; only first names are used on the prayer chain. Please ask permission if requesting prayers for someone other than yourself from either the person or a family member of the person.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the prayer chain, please contact Helen Steen at 563-243-2288 or Mary Lou Mallicoat at 563-357-2963.



COUNCIL NEWS

Summary of Congregation Council Minutes – December 9, 2025

(The full minutes are posted on the bulletin board near the church office.)

Pastor's Report: The pastor reported to the Council that there will be three baptisms on the last Sunday of December.

Membership Update: Kristi Montgomery shared the Statistical Report for November. Total weekend attendance YTD is 6,585. The average weekend worship attendance YTD is 137.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer, Deb Vath, reported that as of month end November, Expenses have exceeded Income YTD in the amount of (\$23,459.89). Deb reported to the Council that there are two CD investments that will mature on 12/18/25. She led a discussion on a path forward for these funds and will check CD rates. Linda Dutchess moved to accept the Treasurer's Report with Patti Lauritzen seconding the motion. All ayes.

Committee Reports: Deb Vath shared with the Council that the Social Ministry committee had a very successful Community Auction and Brunch. The event was able to raise \$5,780.00 for the Information and Referral service.

Old Business:

Technology Committee: It was reported to the Council by President Kristi Montgomery that a solid group has been formed and that they will meet soon.

Nominating Committee: Kristi Montgomery reported that there are still two open positions for the 2026 Council and that the committee will continue to work to fill these.

Stewardship Committee: Linda Dutchess shared with the Council that there have been 113 pledge cards returned.

Pork and Sauerkraut Supper - Recommendation of Profits: Melissa Werner reported that the 2025 profit from Pork and Sauerkraut Supper was \$3,569.00. Melissa made a motion, on behalf of the committee, to disburse the funds as follows: \$4,000 to remain in the account for the 2026 dinner expenses, \$3,000 to the Student Aid Fund and \$4,821 to the Technology Committee. Patti Lauritzen seconded the motion. All ayes.

New Business:

Pictorial Directory: Council member Deb Willwerth brought questions from the Congregation concerning the Pictorial Directory. There was a request for more pictures to be added to the directory. Linda Dutchess explained that if members send her their pictures, she would be happy to add them. She has also offered to take pictures of members who request one. Another question asked "are there printed copies of the directory available?". During the Council discussion of this question, it was stated that, with pictures, the cost of printing the directory would increase.

FINANCIAL CORNER

December 2025 at a glance

General Operating	December	Year To Date
Income +	\$47,529.12	\$342,573.29
Expense -	\$22,711.45	\$341,165.51
Difference =	\$24,817.67	\$1,407.78

December In-Person Worship Attendance

Weekend	Saturday	Sunday	Total
December 6 & 7	51	95	146
December 13 & 14	36	63	99
December 20 & 21	54	91	145
December 27 & 28	33	98	131
Average	44	87	130

Christmas Eve In-Person Worship Attendance

	4:00 PM	7:00 PM	Total
December 24 th	252	117	369
Average			185

In the Hospital? Moved to a Care Facility?

Because of privacy laws, hospitals & care facilities are following strict guidelines for the sharing of patient/resident information. **Please be sure to call the church office or the pastor to keep us informed.**

FEBRUARY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 9:00 AM: Worship	2 10:45 AM: Sack Lunch Monday 5:30 PM: Girl Scouts	3 5:00 PM: Executive Committee 5:50 PM: All-Committee Night	4 9:00 AM: Morning Prayer/ Bible Study 5:15 PM: Faith FUNdations/ Confirmation 5:45 PM: Bell Rehearsal 6:45 PM: Choir Rehearsal	5	6	7 5:30 PM: Worship
8 9:00 AM: Worship	9 10:45 AM: Sack Lunch Monday 5:30 PM: Girl Scouts	10 5:30 PM: Boy Scouts 6:00 PM: Congregation Council	11 9:00 AM: Morning Prayer/ Bible Study 1:30 PM: Rebecca Circle 5:15 PM: Faith FUNdations/ Confirmation 5:45 PM: Bell Rehearsal 6:45 PM: Choir Rehearsal	12	13	14 5:30 PM: Worship
15 9:00 AM: Worship 10:00 AM: Birthday Fellowship	16 3:00 PM - 6:30 PM: Blood Drive	17 5:00 PM: Childcare Board 5:30 PM: Boy Scouts	18 9:00 AM: Morning Prayer/ Bible Study 10:00 AM: Zion Book Club 5:15 PM: Faith FUNdations/ Confirmation 5:45 PM: Bell Rehearsal 6:45 PM: Choir Rehearsal	19	20	21 5:30 PM: Worship
22 9:00 AM: Worship	23 9:00 AM: Quilters 5:30 PM: Girl Scouts	24 5:30 PM: Boy Scouts	25 9:00 AM: Morning Prayer/ Bible Study 5:15 PM: Faith FUNdations/ Confirmation 5:45 PM: Bell Rehearsal 6:45 PM: Choir Rehearsal	26 9:30 AM: First Circle Friends	27 10:30 AM: Courier Assembly	28 5:30 PM: Worship

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ZION'S STAFF

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◆
Kelly Bork, Director
Zion Child Care Preschool
Phone: 563-243-9393
zioncc-ps@hotmail.com

◆
Patrick Hoffman, Custodian

OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday
9:00 a.m.— 3:00 p.m.