

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

Vol. 95 No. 5

THE

COURIER

May 2025



From
the desk
of

Pastor Julie Higgs

New Season, New Vision

There's a rule of thumb for new pastors that suggests they not make big changes for at least a year. I've been at Zion for a little over a year now. *(Cue the scary music.)*

Relax. I'm so impressed by this congregation and the ways you serve that I don't have a long laundry list of things I want to change. But we need your input on several important topics:

Our Technology

You may have noticed that our livestream videos are not the best out there. At our 2025 annual meeting, we voted to earmark some money from the Greatest Needs Fund to improve some of our technology, and we've formed a committee to look at what options are affordable and have the potential for significantly improving the ways in which we provide worship services for those unable to attend in person. Please talk with Erin Montgomery if you have knowledge and talents to help the committee figure out what changes would be most helpful.

Communication

We also know that we haven't always found ways to communicate information to the congregation—particularly if there isn't a lot of time to do so. For example, we've had members die early in the week, had the funeral later in the week, and didn't have an efficient way to let you know. So, we're looking at ways to expand the times we can send e-mails or texts to large numbers of our members to make more information available in a timely manner. Please send Amanda or me any suggestions to help us look at options and think this through.

Confirmation

Zion's Confirmation program has classes during 6th through 8th grades, with students generally confirmed in the fall of 9th grade. Some churches have two-year programs. We'd like to gather your thoughts and opinions about what we include in

Continued on next page...

Confirmation, why we do it, how long we should do it, and how we help our youth stay engaged after they're confirmed. Send your thoughts to me, and watch for opportunities during May and June to gather and talk about these things.

Caring Committee

We are blessed at Zion with many people who regularly go to visit our homebound members, sometimes taking Holy Communion to them as well. With my moving to part-time, I'm not able to visit people as often as I would like, and I cannot lead worship services at facilities where we have several members. As a congregation, we're committed to caring for one another, and we could use some "light-handed" organization of our efforts. Please let me know if you (1) routinely visit any of our homebound members and/or (2) would be willing to help us organize our visits and increase our home communion visits. Send your ideas to me and watch for information about opportunities to help us think through these things.

It's Easter—it's spring—it's time to celebrate newness in our lives! Help us do this faithfully!

Pastor Julie

Noisy Coins Add UP!!!

All those pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters have not only made a joyful NOISE, but have added up to over \$1,420! This offering is addressing hunger needs locally and globally. The offerings are split between the local food pantry at IRAS and World Hunger. KUDDOS to the KIDDOS for a great job "making noise" at every service!! Keep the "noise" coming!!!



Help Clean the Kitchen

The kitchen is in need of a Spring Cleaning! A cleaning that has not been done in several years. The Rebecca Circle is looking for volunteers to assist with this cleaning. The women have hopes that each group that uses the kitchen for any reason at all will have two or more members represent the group in this cleaning. The more who assist with the cleaning, the quicker it can be done. Please contact Carol Gruhn with any questions.

Zion Child Care & Preschool

It's hard to believe our school year is coming to an end! It was such a great year and we are so proud of all the things our students learned. They have grown so much!

We are ending our year with field trips to Riverfront Park. They are so excited to use the zip line! We even bring our snack to the park to eat!

Our 4 year-old preschool classes will end the year with their graduation ceremony. They are absolutely adorable in their graduation caps! They will sing songs for their families and then walk across the stage to graduate.

We are currently enrolling for our 2025/2026 school year for 3 year-old and 4 year-old preschool. We only have a couple of spots remaining. Please help us spread the word. Interested families can call the center at 243-9393 or stop in to fill out registration paperwork.

Kelly Bork,
Director



Faith Foundations

Faith FUNdations has just wrapped up the year with an end of the year party. The children played games and reviewed the monthly lessons. At the end of the night, we had a scavenger hunt and ice cream. Thank you to all the children and their parents for continuing to be there week after week. We have had some amazing fellowship and made some lasting connections along the way. We look forward to seeing you all back in September!

We also want to thank everyone that volunteered throughout the year, we appreciate your hard work and dedication to this program. And to the congregation thank you for your continued support, donated food items and prayers. If you see any of these volunteers, please thank them for all they do for Faith FUNdations!

Linda Schoening	Barb Rhoades	Gina Schwartz	Heidi Witt	Sue Witt
Helen Steen	Aubree Tanzillo	Carrie Sukut	Deb Willwerth	
Jenny Thompson	Derek Gabel	Jenna Gabel	Whitney Veenstra	
Olivia Veenstra	Jeanne Crow	Kristi Schroeder	Ashley Kreinbrink	
Jane Noecker	Linda Shaff	Judy Luett	Jessica Hilgendorf	
Linda Dutchess	Tara Rhoades	Amber Turner	Melanie Simpson	
Dawn Eickert	Deb Kaszinski	Beth Griswold	Jodie Krogmann	
Jenis Richmond	Barb Mahmens	Ardyce Adams	Roberta Leeper	

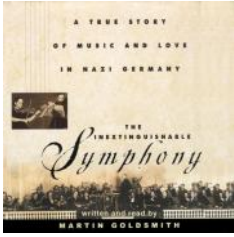
Prayer Partnerships

Through our Time and Talent sheets, many of you signed up to be a Prayer Partner with our Faith FUNdation and Confirmation students. This has been a rewarding partnership for both partners. Below are comments shared about praying for our youth.

"Praying for him daily makes me feel so connected to this child even though we rarely meet in person. It has been a great reminder to me how powerful it is to lift up prayers on behalf of others. We do see each other every once in a while at worship. He has mentioned to me how much he enjoys getting a note/card from me in the mail."

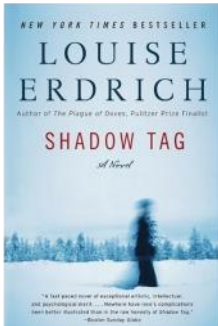
"Early in our prayer partnership I had mentioned how baseball reminds me of time spent with my father...this subject remains a connection between my prayer partner and me as he enjoys watching and playing baseball. Praying for him regularly has been very important to me! It is an extra special treat when we see each other at worship!"

New Zion Library Books for May 2025



The Inextinguishable Symphony by Martin Goldsmith is the true story of music and love in Nazi Germany. Both of Goldsmith's parents were Jewish musicians in Germany in the 1940's. For awhile, the Nazi's allowed the Jews to have a program of music and other arts, although with strict controls over it. Only Jews (and SS soldiers) could attend concerts, and it could only be advertised in Jewish newspapers. After a time, the symphony could not play pieces written by Germans. Goldsmith's parents were finally allowed to immigrate to America just before the Nazi's closed the whole program down.

The Complete Peanuts: 1950-1952 by Charles M. Schulz introduces the strip's beloved characters—Lucy, Schroeder, Snoopy, Linus, and, of course, Charlie Brown.

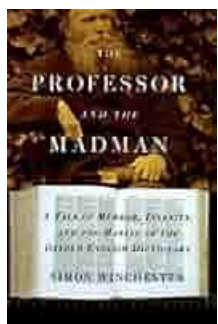


Shadow Tag a novel by Louise Erdrich. When Irene discovers that her husband, Gil, has been reading her diary, she begins a secret Blue Notebook, stashed securely in a safe-deposit box. There she records the truth about her life, while turning the Red Diary—hidden where Gil will find it—into a manipulative farce. Alternating between these two records, complemented by unflinching third-person narrative, *Shadow Tag* is an eerily gripping read.

USING ZION'S LIBRARY

Our library is a “serve yourself” kind of library. Most of the books are novels, labeled with a #1. The other categories are listed on the wall by the checkout desk. Write your name and the date you check out the book on the card and place it with the other cards on the desk. Return the books to the box on the floor next to the desk. Simple, right? Happy reading!

ZION'S BOOK CLUB



Zion's Book Club will meet in the church library on Wednesday, May 21st, at 10:00 a.m. We will be discussing ***The Professor and the Madman: A Tale of Murder, Insanity, and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary*** by Simon Winchester. This is an updated version of a 27-year-old classic. It is an extraordinary tale of the incredible obsession of two remarkable men that led to one of the most ambitious projects ever undertaken. The OED's oversight committee was stunned to discover that one man had submitted more than 10,000 entries. And that wasn't the last surprise. The books are on the cart in the library. Please join us!

Memorial Gifts to Zion's Ministries

One of the ways we can fondly remember our loved ones is to designate gifts in their memory to Zion Lutheran Church. These memorial gifts are used to further the desired ministries of the donor and the family of the memorialized individual - the ministry of Zion as a whole (within the congregation and/or through the ELCA) or to a particular designated aspect of our ministry.

Between 12/24/2024 and 04/20/2025, the following individuals have had memorial gifts given in their memory and directed to and through Zion Lutheran Church.

♥ Judy Carstensen	Greatest Needs
♥ Kenneth Kremer	Forward in Faith
♥ Ed Sukut	Greatest Needs & Faith FUNdations
♥ Shirley Reed	Greatest Needs
♥ Mary Hehlke	Greatest Nees
♥ Jane Schrader	Forward in Faith
♥ Ron Andresen	Forward in Faith

Thank you for remembering the ministries of Zion as our loved ones are remembered.

Thank you!

Thanks to so many of you who have helped Zion work towards addressing the food insecurity that exists in this community. Through your gifts, Social Ministry distributes 50 sack lunches each month from IRAS. In addition, we served a pork loin dinner to 125 guests at the "Hope in Action" Community dinner at St. Paul on the March 9. Your gifts are SO needed and appreciated.....Thank you!!!

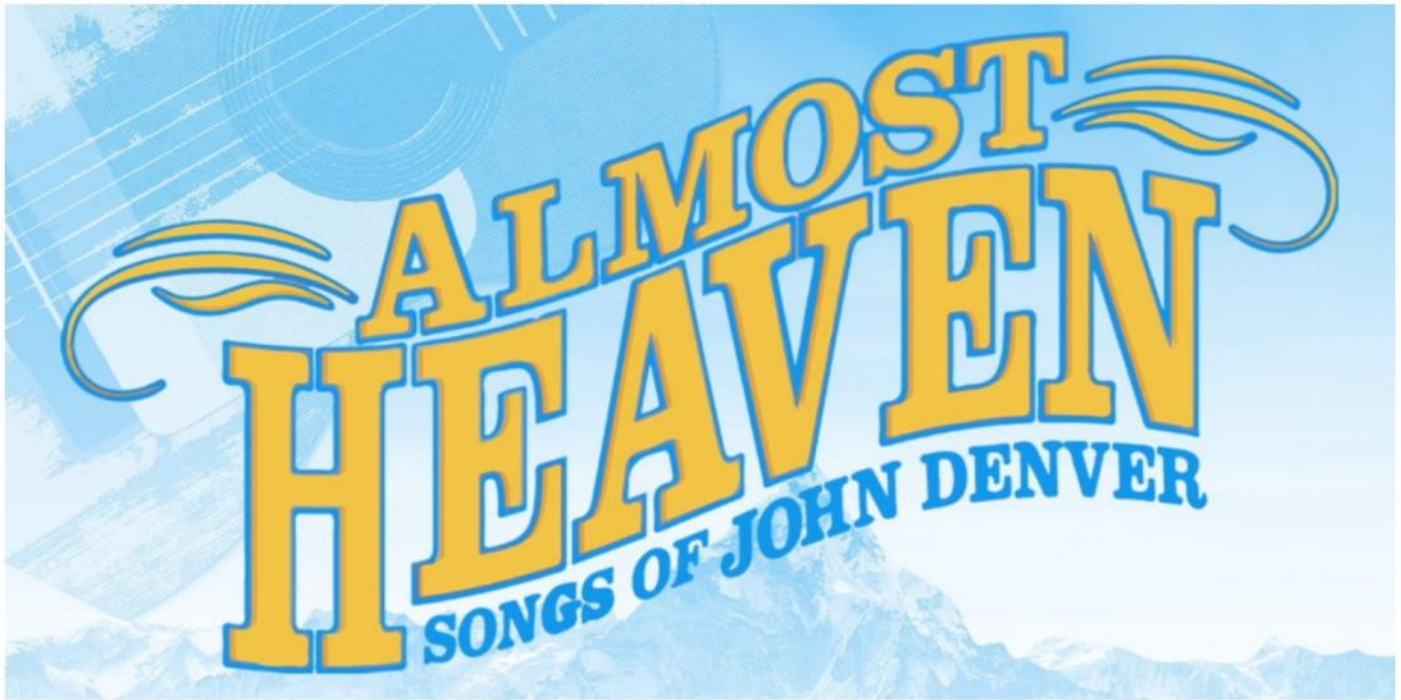
Monthly Birthday Fellowship

May's birthday fellowship in the Gathering Space will be held on Sunday, May 25th, 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 April. Refreshments and cupcakes will be served.

All are welcome!!!





**IT'S SHOWTIME!!!!
SUNDAY, AUGUST 10, 2025 @ 3 pm**

The Fellowship Committee invites you to mark your calendars for an afternoon at the Clinton Area Showboat Theatre 🎭 for the presentation of "Almost Heaven: The Songs of John Denver." 🎵

Among the most beloved entertainers of his era, John Denver was an American musical icon who achieved great success with his down-to-earth acoustic sound. Come join the talented showboat cast as they celebrate the life & times of Denver with over 25 of his chart-topping hits: "Rocky Mountain High", "Annie's Song", "Sunshine on my Shoulders", "Thank God, I'm a County Boy", & many more.

Tickets for the performance are \$18/person and must be purchased in advance to reserve your spot(s). (a minimum of 20 tickets must be sold) Reservation forms need to be filled-out & returned, along with payment, to the church no later than Monday, May 12, 2025. (These tickets would make great Mothers Day gifts!!!) Reservation forms can be found in the weekend bulletins and Zion's office. Any questions you have can be answered by calling Amanda at the church office. Your reserved tickets will be available on the day of the performance.

Hope to see you there for an afternoon of fun, song & great fellowship!!!

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Number of Tickets: _____

Paid Cash: \$ _____

Paid Check: \$ _____

Please make checks payable to Zion Lutheran Church

COUNCIL NEWS

Summary of Congregation Council Minutes – March 11, 2025
(The full minutes are posted on the bulletin board near the church office.)

Pastor's Report: Pastor Julie notified the Council that, due to personal & family health reasons, she will be moving to part-time effective the first full pay period in March. A revised contract will be written. Pastor Julie will continue with select duties such as Worship, Confirmation, Emergency Calls and will be available for special needs of the Congregation. Discussion was held concerning other duties that were covered by the Pastor and how these will be done going forward.

Membership Update: Kristi Montgomery shared the Statistical Report for February. Total weekend attendance YTD is 957. The average weekend worship attendance YTD is 120. Congregational Membership as of month end February is 562 Baptized Members and 465 Confirmed Members.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer, Deb Vath, reported that the giving through envelopes in February was less than January however, we are on schedule YTD. We have had a larger expense in Pulpit Supply. YTD, expenses are over Income in the amount of (\$2,655). Deb reviewed the Fund balances with the Council. Linda Dutchess moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Deb Willwerth seconded the motion. All ayes.

Old Business:

Call Committee Report: The Call Committee will meet with Pastor Kuckuck on 03/12/2025. The committee is at the point in the process where they can receive names for a Call if there are any names available.

New Business:

Scholarship Committee: New members have joined the Scholarship committee. The new members of the committee are: Barb Rhodes, Roxanne McElroy and Lee Camp. Kristi Montgomery is also on the committee as acting chairman. There is one more opening available on the committee. Applications for scholarships are being sent out as requested. One question asked was if the Greatest Needs fund could be a source of funding for the Scholarships. This will need to be discussed by the Council at a later meeting.

Interim Pastoral Support: Visitation support was the main topic of discussion. We may want to consider a new hire to help with this ministry. This item will be placed on the agenda for the April Council meeting.

Sharing a Meal



Saint Paul and Zion Summer VBS
July 21 - July 24

5:30 - 7:00 pm

Free Family Supper each night 4:45 - 5:30 pm

VBS will be held at Zion Lutheran Church
439 3rd Ave S.

For more information contact Zion's Church Office at 563-242-7391

Vacation Bible School Registration

2025 "Sharing a Meal" July 21st—July 24th

Children going into preschool (and potty trained) through going into 6th grade are welcome to join us.

Child Name _____ Grade Going Into _____

Child Name _____ Grade Going Into _____

Child Name _____ Grade Going Into _____

Child Name _____ Grade Going Into _____

Parent/Guardian Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Home Church _____

Number of family members attending dinner each night _____

I would like to volunteer to help at VBS _____ Name _____ Phone _____

Emergency Contact (other than the above name/number)

Name _____ Phone _____

Do we have permission to use your child(rens) pictures on our website and in social media ____ Yes ____ No

Please RSVP by July 14th by completing this form and returning it to Zion or St. Paul

A nightly offering will be given to food programs through Information, Referral, & Assistance Services.

FINANCIAL CORNER

March 2025 at a glance

General Operating	March	Year To Date
Income +	\$26,143.94	\$90,636.67
Expense -	\$26,568.55	\$93,717.07
Difference =	-\$424.61	-\$3,080.40

March In-Person Worship Attendance

Weekend	Saturday	Sunday	Total
March 1 & 2	58	65	123
March 8 & 9	48	85	133
March 15 & 16	51	95	146
March 22 & 23	52	69	121
March 29 & 30	51	90	141
Average	52	81	133

Call Committee Waits for Candidates

With Zion's Ministry Site Profile turned in a few months ago, the Call Committee is currently waiting to receive names of prospective candidates from the synod office. Pastor Dan Kuckuck, Assistant to the Bishop for Leadership and Congregational Transitions, met with the call committee in March and talked about the shortage of pastors available for new calls. He also noted that he didn't expect to have new candidates until after Lent at the earliest. Please continue to pray for the Holy Spirit to open the hearts of pastors who may have the gifts to serve at Zion, and for the Call Committee as they continue their work of "holy waiting."

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Worship services are:

Saturdays	5:30 pm
Sundays	9:00 am

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

MAY 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3 5:30 PM: Worship w/ Choir Cantata
4 9:00 AM: Worship w/ Choir Cantata 10:00 AM: Cinco de Mayo Luncheon	5 5:30 PM: Elizabeth Circle	6 5:00 PM: Executive Committee 5:50 PM: All Committee Night	7 9:00 AM: Morning Prayer/ Bible Study 6:00 PM: Bell Choir 6:30 PM: Adult Choir	8	9	10 5:30 PM: Worship w/ Blessing of Prayer Shawls and Prayer Squares
11 9:00 AM: Worship w/ Blessing of Prayer Shawls and Prayer Squares	12 10:45 AM: Sack Lunch Monday 5:00 PM: Girl Scouts	13 5:30 PM: Boy Scouts 6:00 PM: Congregation Council	14 9:00 AM: Morning Prayer/ Bible Study 1:30 PM: Rebecca Circle 6:30 PM: Adult Choir	15 5:00 PM: Ladies Night Out	16	17 8:30 AM: Synod Assembly 5:30 PM: Worship
18 9:00 AM: Worship w/ Baptism	19 9:00 AM: Quilters	20 5:00 PM: Childcare Board 5:30 PM: Boy Scouts	21 9:00 AM: Morning Prayer/ Bible Study 10:00 AM: Zion Book Club	22 10:00 AM: First Circle Friends	23	24 5:30 PM: Worship
25 9:00 AM: Worship	26 Office Closed	27 5:30 PM: Boy Scouts 10:30 AM: Courier Assembly	28 9:00 AM: Morning Prayer/ Bible Study	29	30	31 5:30 PM: Worship

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ZION'S STAFF

Pastor Julie Higgs, Interim Pastor
pastorjulie@zionlutheranclinton.org
Phone: 563-242-7391
515-468-7118

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

Amanda Deuermeyer, Office Administrator
Phone: 563-242-7391
officeadministrator@zionlutheranclinton.org

◆
Donica Vonderohe, Staff Musician
music@zionlutheranclinton.org

◆
Patrick Hoffman, Custodian

OFFICE HOURS

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