

## Pastoral Ponderings

### *From Pastor Phil.....*

Have you ever really taken a moment to consider the Crucifixion? It sounds like a ridiculous question, but so often we come to a point that we celebrate Holy Week, but it kind of rushes past us, and as it rushes past, some of the little bits that take our breath away get rushed past as well.

The Crucifixion of anyone was an utterly ruthless activity. The person being crucified didn't really die of the wounds so much as asphyxiation as the diaphragm lost the ability, due to exhaustion, to take breaths. This was the real cause of death, but the process was remarkably painful. There's a great deal of scholarship out there about the physical realities of what a crucified person experienced, and none of it sounds comfortable. One scholar pointed out that the nail was driven through the wrist and not the hand so that the physical structure could support the weight of the body. In other words, all the flesh in the hand is insufficient to support the weight of the body; and consequently, would tear away allowing the victim to be "free". It has been found that properly placed in the wrist, the boney structure of the wrist would allow for the complete support of the body, with the added benefit that it placed the nail in direct contact with a nerve that ran through the wrist... so every breath... every time the person lifted themselves to breathe resulted in enormous agony. Every movement rubbed the nerve on that nail. It is horrifyingly brilliant. My understanding is that scholars are split on how the foot was nailed to the cross. Some argue that the feet would have been nailed next to each other, while other argue they would have been placed the way most artistic expressions show. The argument is fueled by practical historians/archeologists that have shown that both ways are very possible. Then there's the archeological proof found by way of a heel bone in Israel. Suffice it to say that either way, the reality of this is agony.

Then there is the cross itself. Romans were smart folks. They were incredibly rational in their actions, and many ancient historians speak to the reality of how crucifixion occurred. We like to think of Jesus as having carried a brand new clean cross. We like the romantic, artistic

### **The remaining Lenten Services:**

April 2 & 9 @ 3:30 & 7:00 p.m.

### **Confirmand Questioning**

the 5:00 p.m. service on  
Saturday April 12, 2025

### **Holy Week:**

April 13 Palm Sunday &  
Confirmation Day @ 10 a.m.

April 17 Maundy Thursday

3:30 & 7:00 p.m.

(stripping of the Altar @ 7)

April 18 Good Friday

@ 3:30 (Chief Worship)

& 7:00 p.m. (Tennebrae Service)

April 19 Prayer Vigil

Service @ 6:00 p.m.

April 20 Easter Sunday:

6 a.m. Easter Sunrise

10 a.m. Resurrection Service

picture that we hold to, but reality was likely very different. Jesus probably had his arms tied to the cross member of the upright. The uprights were very infrequently taken down as it didn't make good use of time. It was much faster to simply hoist up the cross member. Maybe this was the case, maybe it wasn't; but most agree that Jesus would have simply had the crossmember tied to His arms... which meant when He fell there was no way to brace against it.

The other little bit we like to think is that the cross was clean, fresh, and new. Most likely it wasn't. There is a high probability that criminals had been crucified on Jesus' cross, and criminals went after. The picture of the cross, properly understood, is one that is gory and miserable. There is nothing romantic or pleasant about it. Jesus blood, on that cross, mingled with that of men, women, and children who also had been executed this way.

The presentation was rough as well. There was the physical pain and discomfort, but there was also the mental. Historians tell us that people, when crucified, had everything stripped from them. Their clothes were taken, and they were hung naked. Every last shred of pride that they had was removed. Every last little shred of dignity was stripped away. The single goal of crucifixion was to humiliate and embarrass as the person died. There was nothing gentle or pleasant about it. Every last shred of anything of value to you was stripped away. As you died in agony, you were seen naked, and your belongings taken. You were left with nothing. Nothing physically, nothing psychologically. Everything was taken.

Jesus bore this for us. Not only did He bear this, but He bore so much more. He suffered the lies of His chosen people. He was beaten and abused. He was spit on and mistreated, and all of this was before He was crucified. It can almost be too much to sit down and contemplate in a single sitting. It can be overwhelming.

Here's the other overwhelming side of it- that's how much Jesus loves you. He bore all of this to make you right before the Father, so that we can abide with Jesus into eternity. As striking as the crucifixion is for its brutality, the love of God stands in stark contrast. All the wickedness brought to bear from humanity is nothing compared to the love of God found in Christ Jesus. All of this makes these words so much sweeter...

CHRIST IS RISEN!!



HE'S RISEN INDEED!

**Zion Alumni & Friends will again offer a scholarship this spring.** To be eligible, you must be a graduating high school senior and an 8th grade graduate of Staunton Zion Lutheran School. The applicant must be enrolled in or accepted by a university, college or vocational school after graduation. If you are interested in applying, please contact the church office at zionlutheranstaunton@gmail.com. Completed applications should be turned into the church office by Friday, April 11, 2025. Or mail it to: Zion Lutheran Church, 311 S. Elm St. Staunton, Illinois 62088.\*\*\*\*\*

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“Shining a Light” on ...



Zion School's Best Readers

### **Top 3rd Quarter by Class**

- Kindergarten - Avery Mayrenik
- 1st Grade - Henry DaGama Rose
- 2nd Grade - Olivia Welch
- 3rd Grade - Mia France
- 4th Grade - Lilly Manning
- 5th Grade - Tori Davis
- 6th Grade - Abigail Mosser
- 7th Grade - Jax Davis
- 8th Grade - Claire McCalla

### **Top 10 Readers in the school based on percentage points for 3rd quarter**

- 10. Elly Hunt-316%
- 9. Charlie DaGama Rose-324%
- 8. Mila Griffith-326%
- 7. Eli McMahan-348%
- 6. Mia France-354%
- 5. JT Blessman-362%
- 4. Henry DaGama Rose-376%
- 3. Olivia Welch-512%
- 2. Luke Davis-1162%
- 1. Jax Davis-1291%

**Look up! I hear it coming! Is it a train? A soccer game? It's Zion's First Noisy Offering!**

On the weekend of April 5-6, we will have our first Noisy Offering for the mission projects of the Lutheran Women in Mission. Fill your mite boxes with change, dollars, checks, and dump them into our metal buckets which will be part of our worship service. Kids of all ages will be amazed at the way our gifts to the Lord can help everyone in need. Here's the list of all the current mission projects.



Organization	Amount Approved	Amount Paid	Remaining Amount to be Paid
Seminary Student Scholarship – SID	\$8,000	-0-	\$8,000
Braille Centers in our SID (3 Centers)	\$6,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Camp Wartburg “Shepherding Sheep” Camp for People with Disabilities	\$5,000	-0-	\$5,000
Belong to Jesus Scholarship, Unity, East St. Louis	\$5,000	\$2,500	\$2,500
Shared Prison & Jail Ministry with Southern Illinois District	\$6,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Equipping Soldiers for Christ, Christ Our Savior Lutheran High School, Evansville	\$5,000	\$2,500	\$2,500
Rev. Mueller Mentor Grant-Christ Our Rock Lutheran High School, Centralia	\$5,000	\$2,500	\$2,500
Student Assistance Fund Scholarships -SID	\$4,000	-0-	\$4,000
Orphan Grain Train, Ukrainian Mission & Ministry	\$5,000	\$2,500	\$2,500
SIUE, Edwardsville—LCMS Lutheran Campus Ministry	\$3,500	-0-	\$3,500
SIU Carbondale American & International Campus Ministry	\$5,000	\$2,500	\$2,500
LLC K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry Continuing the Mission	\$5,000	\$2,500	\$2,500
Sharing God’s Word with the Visually Impaired in Prison	\$6,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Office of International Missions, Kenya - Christ’s Care for Children	\$4,320	-0-	\$4,320
Physical Wellness for At-Risk Children, Dakota Boys & Girls Ranch	\$4,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
LAMP 55x55 Initiative	\$4,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
LCMS Missionary Support Mission Central, Iowa	\$1,590	-0-	\$1,590
Trinity HOPE, TN - Feeding Haitian Souls, One Bowl of Rice and Beans at a Time,	\$1,590	-0-	\$1,590
<b>TOTAL With the help of the Lord! As of (02/01/2025)</b>	<b>\$84,000</b>	<b>\$28,000</b>	<b>\$56,000</b>

## HOW YOUR MITES ARE WORKING IN THE DISTRICT LWML

And He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. (Luke 10:2). Did you know the Southern Illinois District has scholarships available for anyone going into church ministry? We have Student Assistance Scholarships and Seminary Student Scholarships. Anyone living in the Southern Illinois District, that is planning on going to a LCMS College for Deaconess, Teacher, Director of Christian Education, Pre-seminary, or to be a Pastor can apply for a scholarship. If you know of someone going into church ministry, please have them go to our website, [sidlwml.org](http://sidlwml.org) to fill out an application. The deadline of March 15, 2025 is fast approaching for the 2025-2026 scholarship applications to be accepted. If you have any questions, please contact me at [outreach@sidlwml.org](mailto:outreach@sidlwml.org)

With your generous mites, this quarter we were able to pay out \$15,500 to our grant recipients. These recipients were Shared Prison & Jail Ministry, Orphan Grain Train, Lutheran Braille Workers, American & International Campus Ministry at SIU Carbondale, LAMP 55 x 55 Initiative, and Christ Our Rock Lutheran High School.

This quarter we will feature grant recipient, Holy Cross, Collinsville, LCC K9 Comfort Dog Ministry.

Launched in August 2008, the Lutheran Church Charities K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry is a national human-care ministry embracing the unique, calming nature and skills of purebred Golden Retrievers. The LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs are a bridge for compassionate ministry, opening doors for conversation about faith and creating opportunities to share the mercy, compassion, presence, and proclamation of Jesus Christ. LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs are working animals, trained to interact with people of all ages and circumstances who are suffering and in need. The dogs participate in scheduled and special events. Dogs are permanently placed with churches, schools and other ministries involved in Christian human care by LCC. We are blessed, that one of those locations is here in our area, at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Collinsville, they currently have 2 dogs, Esther and Jordan. Permanent placement includes full training for handlers and caregivers along with ongoing support, coaching and training. LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs live in the homes of assigned caregivers.

The LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs serve every day in the community in which they are placed and are deployed in times of disaster and crisis to bring comfort to all those affected, including first responders and the volunteers who serve them.

Holy Cross has received the first of two grants in the amount of \$2,500. When asked how they will use this money, here is their reply:

**What specific things for your ministry will be/have been accomplished with the money?**

Because of this grant, we will be able to continue to care for our Comfort Dogs so that they will be fit to serve with their handlers to those in need in our community.

**Specifically, to whom/what was this money given and how are the funds being distributed?**

These funds are deposited into the Comfort Dog Ministry Fund at Holy Cross. They are paid out as needed.

**How did/does this grant share the Good News?**

The Comfort Dog Ministry is a main outreach in the community. We share the love and mercy of Christ to those who are suffering and in need. This grant allows us to do that by funding the care of the dogs.

**Write a brief personal story about how this grant money impacted individual(s)**

Every Comfort Dog visit makes an impact, although we often do not know it at the time. A nursing home resident, or a school teacher, or a healthcare worker will tell us of a time when the dogs' visit happened at a time when they were particularly lonely, despairing or stressed. The dogs and their handlers show love by their quiet presence, or kind words or hugs. Everyone is blessed by their visits!

--Written by Kathy Nagel, V.P. of Gospel Outreach for LWML

Submitted, with her permission, by Sue Miller



## End of the Year Events for Zion's Youth Group

April 11: SID senior youth retreat at Camp Wartburg

April 27: MS 3-5/HS 4-6

May 4: middle school 4-5 pm

Mandatory youth/parent meeting for gathering participants 5-6 pm (bring copies of insurance cards)

High school: potluck 6-7 pm

Middle school retreat for youth entering 7-9th grades

June 17-19 at Rustic Acres

Gathering July 17-24

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Zion Lutheran School in Staunton to hold  
Preschool Registration on  
Thursday, April 3, 2025

On Thursday, April 3 Zion Lutheran School in Staunton will hold Preschool Registration. Members of Zion Lutheran Church in Staunton may register from 6-6:30pm. Anyone planning to use daycare full time at Zion may register from 6:30-7pm. All others may register from 7-7:30pm.

The registration form and fee of \$80.00 are due at the time of registration to hold your child's spot in preschool. Final registration will be held on August 5 from 9am-2pm and 5pm-7pm to complete additional paperwork and pay your child's snack fee. An open house/supply drop off night will be held on August 11 at 7:00. An email will be sent with more details during the summer. Preschool for the 4-year-old class will begin on Monday, August 18. Preschool for the 3-year-old class will begin on Tuesday, August 19.

Questions about our program or registration may be answered by calling the school office at 618-635-3060 or by emailing Pam Kleckner at [pam.kleckner@zion-school.org](mailto:pam.kleckner@zion-school.org).

Mrs. Pamela Kleckner

Zion Early Childhood Education Center

Director/Preschool Teacher

220 W. Henry

Staunton, IL 62088

618-635-3060 ext. 1

"The mission of Zion Lutheran School is to guide students toward academic excellence and to prepare them to be Christian Leaders."



# April 2025

## Zion Lutheran Church

By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

— 1 John 3:16 ESV —



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		4:30 p Zion School's Scholar Bowl	8:30 Chapel 9:42 Lydia's Circle 10:30 a Glenwood 3:30 & 7p Lenten Services	8:30 Adult Bible Study 10-noon Pr.Phil @ H.S.S. 6:30 Trustees		3pm Public School Confirmation Class  5pm Divine Service
		Mid-State Circuit & Pastors' Conference B	El India Fundraiser Tonight 9			
8:1030 Divine Services 9:30 Sun School 10:30 Praise Him Choir Sings	Noon-2 Pr.Phil@H.S.S. 6:30 School Board D.C. Fundraiser	9 am-4pm Pr.Phil@Trinity in Nokomis 6:30 Elders/Mtg	8:30 Chapel 9:42 Lydia's Circle 10:30 a Glenwood 3:30 7p Lenten Ser	8:30 Adult Bible Study 10-noon Pr.Phil @ H.S.S.		10-11 Staunton's "Hop-n-Shop" 5 pm Divine Service/Confirmands' Questioning during
<b>Palm Sunday 13</b>	Den Schmidt's Easter Brunch Beginn 14		Little Italy's Fundraiser Tonight 16	Maundy Thursday 17	Good Friday 18	Easter Vigil Tonight 19
No Sun School Today 10 am Divine Service/Confirmation Day ☺	Noon-2 Pr.Phil@H.S.S.  6:30 School Board	10am Alumni & Friends Mtg	8:30 Chapel 9:42 Lydia's Circle 10:30 a Glenwood 2:30 Staun Rehab	8:30 Adult Bible Study 10-noon Pr.Phil @ H.S.S. 3:30 & 7 Services 6pm Parish Education	3:30 "Chief Service" 6p Parish Ed 7:00 Tennessee Serv	6 pm Vigil Service
 Easter! He Has Risen Indeed!! 20	Church Office is Closed Today 21	Zion School's Classes Resume today 22				
6 am Sunrise No Sunday School Today 10 am Resurrection	Noon-2 Pr.Phil@H.S.S. 6p Evangelism	4:30 Stewarship	8:30 Chapel 9:42 Lydia's Circle 10:30 a Glenwood	8:30 Adult Bible Study 10-noon Pr.Phil @ H.S.S.		5pm Divine Service
8 Divine Service 9:30 Sun School 10:30 Joyful Noise Choir Sings	Noon-2 Pr.Phil@H.S.S.	6:30 Council Mtg.	8:30 Chapel 9:42 Lydia's Circle 10:30 a Glenwood			



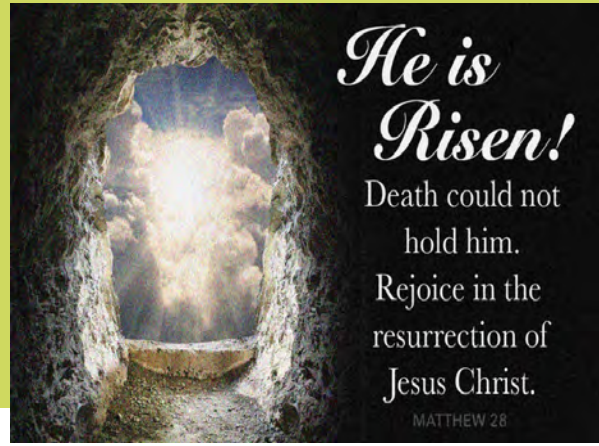
For the love of Christ  
controls us, because we have  
concluded this: that one has  
died for all, therefore all have  
died; and he died for all,  
that those who live might no  
longer live for themselves but  
for him who for their sake died  
and was raised.

— 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 ESV —

# *He is Risen!*

Death could not  
hold him.  
Rejoice in the  
resurrection of  
Jesus Christ.

MATTHEW 28



**ZION LUTHERAN SCHOOL PRESENTS**

# families FUN NIGHT

AT ZION LUTHERAN SCHOOL

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 7TH**  
6:00-8:00

Bring the whole family for a night filled with laughter, and unforgettable memories.

*Event Highlights*

**TOUCH A TRUCK, DUNK TANK  
GAMES & ACTIVITIES  
FOOD & REFRESHMENTS  
FACE PAINTING, CHUCK A DUCK AND  
MORE!**

Invite A friend that is not a student at ZLS and be entered into a drawing for a gift card!

**BEHOLD +  $\neq$**

the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

John 1:29



By this we know love, that  
he laid down his life for us,  
and we ought to lay down  
our lives for the brothers.

— 1 John 3:16 ESV —

