



December 2023

Pastoral Ponderings

From Pastor Phil...

"Away in a manger, no crib for a bed; the little Lord Jesus lay down His sweet head...". There's so much about the holiday season that points us to Jesus, and yet the world specifically seeks to remove Jesus from it. The mildly funny part is as they try to remove Jesus from Christmas, they end up just highlighting another aspect of Him in it. Here's an example of it. The name of Christmas means the Mass of Christ. Now, I will grant there are several older derivations of the name, but most people don't fall back on them. Instead, it is Christmas. The world seeks to remove Christ from Christmas, and in so doing will frequently write it as X-mas. Yet Jesus still hangs on. X, or the Greek letter Chi, is the first letter in the word Christ or Χριστος (Christos) in Greek. As you can see, Christ continues to remain in the mass, even if through the initial. Whenever I see people do this, it makes me smile inwardly because Christ remains. Then we move to happy holidays. I've heard Christians become frustrated here as well. It's removing Jesus. At the same time, it isn't. Jesus clings tenaciously on. Holidays is the corruption of the phrase, "holy day". Christmas is most certainly a holy day. As much as the world seeks to hide Jesus, He simply cannot be pushed away and still have the holiday remain.

Holiday Worship:

Weekend worship remains
Saturdays @ 5:00 p.m.,
Sundays 8:00 and 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday Worship
3:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.
Saturday, December 23
@ 5:00p.m. with Communion

Sunday, December 24
@ 10:00a.m. With Communion
@ 7:00p.m. With Communion
@ 10:00p.m. Candlelight
without Communion

Monday, December 25
@ 10:00a.m. With Communion

Saturday, December 30
@ 5:00 p.m.

With Communion
Sunday, December 31
@ 10:00am

With Communion
New Year's Eve Service @
7:00 p.m. With Communion

So how do you celebrate, and remember, Jesus on Christmas in your own way? I recall one family that for Christmas dinner had birthday cake as a desert, rejoicing that they were celebrating Jesus' birthday. There was a decoration that took root several years ago that had a large nail hung near the trunk of the tree. It was there as a reminder to the family of the house to what Jesus came to do. It's a rather poignant thing. My family follows a custom that comes from the medieval church. We wrap Baby Jesus as a gift and place Him under the tree. At some point on Christmas, someone will open Him, and at that time Jesus goes into the manger, with the Magi following 12 days later. How do you rejoice and celebrate Jesus during this season?

Over the centuries, the church has celebrated the nativity of Jesus Christ in song and worship. This year, we continue this practice and look intentionally at those hymns. We consider the message they tell us and the hope that they give. We rejoice as we move from Advent into Christmas and there rejoice as we remember the hope of the world come to us.

Brothers and sisters, I pray that as you celebrate the Christmas holidays that you are surrounded by friends and family. I pray that the joy and peace you receive isn't something that evaporates with the New Year, but is something that continues with you, as Jesus does, into 2024 and beyond. As we trim our houses, decorate the tree, and wrap presents this holiday, this holy day, season that the joys and peace whisper into your ear that everything is to be a reminder of the very Son of God who came and took on our flesh, was born in a manger, was heralded by Angels, and was attended to by Shepherds. Rejoice and be glad because for all the effort the world puts into removing Jesus, He tenaciously hangs on and remains the very "reason for the season".

Love, joy, and peace be with you this Advent and Christmas season.

Pastor Phil





Holiday Schedule at Zion:

Weekend worship remains the same - Saturday 5:00, Sunday 8:00 and 10:30.

Wednesday (Midweek Advent) Worship services is 3:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

December 23 (Saturday) 5:00 With Communion

December 24 (Sunday) 10:00 With Communion

7:00 With Communion

10:00 Candlelight without Communion

December 25 (Monday) 10:00 With Communion

December 30 (Saturday) 5:00 With Communion

December 31 (Sunday) 10:00 With Communion

7:00 With Communion

December

2023

Zion Lutheran Church

12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Luke 2:12



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Early School Dismissal@Noon	2 5:00 p.m. Worship/Comm
3 8am & 10:30am Worship/Comm 9:30aSunSchool	4 3pm RedCross Blood Drive 5pm D.Q. Fundraiser	5 6:30 p.m. Elders' Meeting	6 8:30 am Chapel 9:00 Lydia Circle 10:30 Glenwood 3:30 & 7 pm Advent Services	7 8:30amAdult Bible Study 5pmEvangelism 6:30Tustees 7:30Men'sClub	8	9 3-6pm H.S.YouthGroup 5:00 p.m. Worship/Comm
10 8am & 10:30am Worship/Comm 9:30aSunSchool	11 6:30 pm School Board	12 Noon-Pastor's Circuit Mtg	13 8:30 am Chapel 9:00 Lydia Circle 10:30 Glenwood 3:30 & 7 pm Advent Services	14 8:30amAdult Bible Study 5:30FamNight PreK-2nd	15 Christmas Gift Shoppe	16 5:00 p.m. Worship/Comm
17 8am & 10:30am Worship/Comm 9:30aSunSchool School'sChristmas Programs @ 1:30 & 3pm	18	19	20 Christmas Break Begins for School	21 Break	22 Break	23 5:00 p.m. Worship/Comm
24 10amWorship/Com 7pmWorship/Com 10pmCandlelight	25 10 am Christmas Day Worship/Comm	26 Break 6:30 AdminCounMtg 7pmParish Ed.	27 Break	28 Break 8:30amAdult Bible Study	29 Break	30 5:00 p.m. Worship/Comm
31 New Year's Eve 10amWorship 7pmWorship	New Year's Day Church is Closed					

Hymns Through the Ages



*Come join Zion for the
season of Advent
as we meditate upon
the hymns handed down to us through
the ages*

Zion Lutheran Church, 311 S. Elm; Staunton, Il. 62088
Worship Saturday 5:00, Sunday 8:00 & 10:30
Wednesday 3:30 & 7:00

Zion Lutheran Church and School
Treasurer's Report – October 2023

Zion Lutheran Church and School - Treasurer's Report - October 31, 2023				
Accounts	10/1/2023	Income	Expenses	10/31/2023
General Fund Balance	\$ 26,542.27	\$ 54,799.99	\$48,720.15	\$ 32,622.11
Payroll Account Balance	\$ 779.74	\$ 59,097.45	\$59,411.82	\$ 465.37
Memorial Fund				
General Memorials	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 4,575.00	\$ 2,123.67	\$ 4,951.33
Parsonage Rent/Repairs	\$ 7,832.02	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,832.00
Memorial Fund Total	\$ 10,332.02	\$ 4,575.00	\$ 2,123.67	\$ 12,783.35
Rowlands Endowment Acct Bal	\$ 11,084.31	\$ 6.07	\$ -	\$ 11,090.38
Shelton Endowment Acct Bal	\$ 4,455.60	\$ 2.44	\$ -	\$ 4,458.04
LCEF Steward Account	\$ 26,020.48	\$ 14.26	\$ -	\$ 26,034.74
Mission/Helping Hands Acct Bal	\$ 3,670.13	\$ 300.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 3,820.13
Alumni and Friends	\$ 22,836.63	\$ 295.00	\$ -	\$ 23,131.63
School Office	\$121,573.16	\$ 20,230.11	\$24,124.82	\$117,678.45
ZECEC	\$ 33,081.81	\$ 17,052.70	\$14,517.10	\$ 35,617.41
Lunch Program	\$ 62,247.61	\$ 4,846.68	\$ 7,540.73	\$ 59,553.56
Athletic Fund	\$ 13,603.64	\$ 1,757.50	\$ 2,135.92	\$ 13,225.22
Script Account	\$ 8,944.34	\$ 4,390.20	\$ 6,523.10	\$ 6,811.44
Thrivent Investments	\$121,557.75	\$ -	\$ -	\$121,557.75
PTL	\$ 93,711.76	\$ 414.00	\$ 670.85	\$ 93,454.91
Ladies Aid Checking	\$ 18,324.36	\$ 100.00	\$ 2,892.61	\$ 15,531.75
Ladies Aid Savings	\$ 6,248.57	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,248.57
Mens Club	\$ 31,083.16	\$ -	\$21,000.00	\$ 10,083.16
Mens Club CD	\$ -	\$ 20,000.00	\$ -	\$ 20,000.00
Men's Club Sausage Supper	\$ 692.29	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 692.29
Youth	\$ 11,359.86	\$ 700.00	\$ 5,140.88	\$ 6,918.98

1. **Stewardship Offerings.** Offerings through the first forty-five weeks of 2023 were \$367,011.80 compared to \$342,996.58 for the same time period in 2022. This includes funds received through Better Together and used for operating expenses.
2. **Invoices.** All invoices through the end of October were paid in full. I anticipated having to ask for funds from organization accounts, but that deemed to be unnecessary.
3. **Mens Club.** The Mens Club purchased a \$20,000.00 7-month CD at the Bank of Hillsboro. The interest rate for the account is 4.88%. Questions concerning the CD may be directed to Tim Seelbach.
4. **Questions? Concerns?** If you have questions or concerns about our finances, you are welcome to call/text me at 618-520-2673 or email me at pm7951@yahoo.com.

Respectfully submitted, Paul Miller, Treasurer

