

## Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church



### The Teller October, 2020

From Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

Between 1527 and 1529, Martin Luther wrote and composed his famous hymn “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.” He based the text of this hymn on Psalm 46: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (verse 1).

Luther knew about trouble. He had been excommunicated by the church and declared an outlaw by the emperor. The bubonic plague had returned to Wittenberg, Germany. His 7-month-old daughter, Elisabeth, had died. Western Europe was under attack by the Ottoman Empire. Civil unrest resulted in the Peasants War, which was brutally crushed by the nobility.

Luther lived in uncertain times.

It’s unlikely that Luther could see with certainty in 1527 how his work would turn out. The Reformation wasn’t a glorious march of unbroken progress. It was messy. The “Reformers” argued with each other. It was violent. It had its share of hateful and divisive rhetoric. Anathemas were levied by all sides against each other. Even at the end of his life, Luther wondered if he had been right, if he had been faithful to the word.

If it wasn’t apparent to Luther and others what was happening, it was clear that something was happening. The world was changing. Political and religious turmoil wasn’t going on in a vacuum. This was a time of new technology—the printing press—and scientific discovery—Copernicus kicking Earth out of the center of the solar system (Luther wasn’t impressed). What new world was emerging? What new thing was God calling into being? How was the

Spirit calling and shaping the church to be a clear witness?

If it wasn’t apparent to Luther and others what was happening, it was clear that something *was* happening. The world was changing.

Five hundred years later we find ourselves in uncertain times. We are in the middle of a pandemic. We have been sheltering in place for months. Thousands have been newly awakened to racial inequity in our society and are marching for change. Education has been disrupted. Worship has taken on new forms. Our homes have become our offices and classrooms. The world is changing and the rate of change in the past five months is unprecedented.

Ours is also a time of new technology and scientific discovery. We are wired and plugged in. Communication is instantaneous. Our cellphones can be used to keep us connected and informed. They can also be used to divide and deceive.

Something new is emerging. The world is changing. We will not be able to return to the world of the pre-COVID days. Change brings loss. Loss brings grief. Yes, we believe in the Resurrection, that God brings life out of death, something new out of the old. But it can be painful, especially when we’re in the middle of it and can’t see clearly how it will all turn out.

Psalm 46 captures the turmoil of Luther’s day and of ours: “The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter” (6). It describes a changing earth, shaking mountains and roaring waters.

But Psalm 46 is also a song of faith—God’s and ours. God is faithful to God’s promises and to God’s people. God is a mighty fortress who fights by our side with weapons of the Spirit. Luther ends the hymn by declaring: “Were they to take our house, goods, honor, child, or spouse, though life be wrenched away, they cannot win the day. The kingdom’s ours forever!” (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, 504).

I believe we are on the brink of this new thing that God is bringing about. We don’t need to see how it will all unfold. We just need to be ready and willing

to answer God's call and be shaped by the Spirit. Secure in God who is our refuge and strength, we can be bold in our witness. God is activating each of us to invite more people into the way of Jesus—the way of grace and mercy, the way of justice and peace, the way of life.

From Pastor Amy Beitelchees-Albers

### **Ponder Anew...what the Almighty can do!**

Last month, I told you of a Synod process/program Zion has become involved in called Inspire. Ignite. Invite. I also mentioned I would keep you posted on what we're doing. As I said previously, we have a team made up of Amy Neild, Teresa Pattison, Carol Miller and myself that attend monthly Zoom meetings. In those meetings, there is a theme, a review of any homework/challenges we were to do from the previous meeting, a Scripture study that applies to our theme, an activity and prayer.

At the first meeting, we simply introduced ourselves and our congregation. We shared how we saw the Holy Spirit moving in, among and through us. We talked a little about some of our congregations' spiritual practices. We had a discussion on how we individually defined "spirituality". We closed with prayer. For me, one the highlights of the meeting was hearing how the Holy Spirit is moving in all our churches- churches that some might say are dying but yet sound very much alive in the Spirit! The other highlight was hearing how folks define "spirituality". Pr. Nancy Nyland, one of our leaders defined it as "Spirituality is not a box to be checked, but a relationship with God to be explored, nurtured, strengthened and lived." Jon Dahl, our other leader quoted Leonard Sweet, "Everything that goes into being in a relationship with God." For me, spirituality is a verb, an action, that speaks to my relationship with God and others and how I live as a called disciple of Christ.

#### **For you to ponder:**

- 1. How do you see the Holy Spirit moving in your life and at Zion?**
- 2. How do you define spirituality?**

Our second meeting had the theme "Gifts Given and Empowered by the Holy Spirit". Some of the initial questions discussed were:

- 1. What is a gift, talent or ability that you have always wished you had? Why would you like to have it?**
- 2. Tell about a time when you received a special gift. Who was the giver? What was the gift.**
- 3. What is a gift that you discovered because someone else recognized it in you first?**

One of the practices we then used was one we have done here at Zion. As we read/listen to Scripture, we keep in the back of our minds, I **notice...I wonder...** 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13 was read 3 times and we did the I notice...I wonder...

<sup>3</sup>Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says "Let Jesus be cursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.

<sup>4</sup>Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup>and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; <sup>6</sup>and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. <sup>7</sup>To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. <sup>8</sup>To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup>to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup>to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup>All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

<sup>12</sup>For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup>For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free — and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

We talked about what we noticed/wondered about and then considered these questions:

- 1. What are some of the gifts that God gives to people?**
- 2. What are some of the gifts that God has given to you?**
- 3. In vs. 7 we read: "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." How are you using your gifts for the common good?**

#### 4. How do you use your gifts to serve and build up the body of Christ, the church?

Finally, we were given these final things to consider in the next month.

1. How does your relationship with God and others grow as you use the gifts that God have given you for the common good?
2. Take time to speak or journal your gratitude to God for someone else's God-given gifts that have benefited you.
3. What gift do you want to develop and use more often? Ask the Holy Spirit to inspire, lead and empower you in this growth process.

I sometimes ask you to send me your feedback and, though it doesn't always happen, I am hopeful you will. Please, as I share with you what we are learning and applying, will you join in? Will you jot me a note, email, text or give me a call and let me know how you would respond. I would greatly appreciate it. Since we can't gather as we once did, this is a way for all of us to join in the process to help us build a Thriving Zion. *It takes all of us and we'll get out of it what we put into it.* If you would prefer that your answers not be shared with council, with others in the congregation or in our meetings, please let me know and I will honor your request. Thank you for helping us continue to live out our mission together!

*Blessings to each of you as together we share Jesus Christ for Life, albeit in a different way!*

Pr. Amy

#### Report from Council

Your Church Council thanks all of you for your patience and understanding as together we face the unique challenges of the Coronavirus pandemic. From the outset, Council has been intent on doing things safely; following the CDC, federal, and state guidelines and recommendations; and listening to the health concerns of members. Special thanks to Dr. Lynn Losby who is serving as our Coronavirus Precautions Coordinator.

**Worship in the Sanctuary** We are pleased to share that beginning this Sunday, October 4, we will return to worshipping in the sanctuary. Masks,

social distancing and disinfection procedures will continue. Hand sanitizing stations will be provided and special precautions for the use of the elevator will be followed. We look forward to this little step back toward normal; although a return to full normal is unlikely, both in our personal lives as well as in the life of the church.

**Live-Streaming** Over these last six months we have made some significant technological advances in order to provide a digital worship experience for those who wished to stay in the safety of their homes. Most recently this has been the introduction of live-streaming. Thanks to a grant from the Center for Congregations we were able to purchase the necessary equipment. We thank Tony Miller, Cheryl Working, and Chloe Steele for their time and expertise which made this possible. It's still a work in progress as we learn how to present a smooth, uninterrupted, reliable and viewer-friendly worship service for our home viewers. Thank you for your patience as we do so.

**The Lutheran Foundation Grant** Back in April the Lutheran Foundation provided an \$11,250 grant to all member congregations to help each address the financial challenges of the pandemic. There were no restrictions on the use of these funds and your Council agreed that Zion should use these unexpected funds for mission outreach and for the benefit of other community organizations. To that end it was agreed to share the grant funds with the following organizations. Most of these we, as a congregation, had already selected to receive our 2020 Mission Support and Baskets of Hope contributions.

Meals on Wheels	\$1,000
Blessings in a Backpack	\$2,000
85 Hope	\$2,000
Manchester Early Learning	\$2,000
Community Foundation COVID Assistance	\$1,000
Daniel's Place	\$750
Hope CSA	\$500
Learn More Center	\$750
Indiana/Kentucky Synod	\$1,250
Total =	\$11,250

Should you have any questions or concerns about these topics or any other matter, please feel free to contact me, Pastor, or any member of the Church Council. Thank you.

Dave Lawrenz, Council President



...to all who helped with the Harvest Arts Festival.  
...to Clayton for his two years in the Zion office as our admin.



**Current:** Robert & Lois Dowd, Jon Perkins, Clayton Marcum, Becky Oden, Nancy Jamerson, Dean McKinley, Jayden Plotner, Mary Lou Rohrer, Will Davidson, Lynn Losby, Ralph Leach, Amy, Haley, John, Cheryl

**Ongoing:** Linda Rager Hampton, Peggy Gilbert, Mara Joy Nelson, Owen Vannoster and his family

**Homebound:** Marie Betten-Niccum, Bo & Joanne Boettcher, Nancy Coble, Betty Hamlin, Ruth Hauser, Betty Lawrenz, Vada Lee Nixon

**Conference and Community:** Calvary Lutheran Church in Angola, Calvary Lutheran Church in Bluffton, Calvary Lutheran Church in Cromwell, Congregational Christian Church

**Community Meal:** Charles Stanton, Rex Rentz, Rose Garber, Julie Walters, Amanda and Todd, Darlene and family, the Jack Hampton, Sr. family, Dale Pickens, Jo, Randy, Alice, Pam, JP, Michelle, Lois, Michael, Anna, Todd and family, healing for our country

**Inspire. Ignite. Invite. Cohort 1 Congregations:** Grace & Glory, Goshen, KY; Bethany, Indianapolis; Zion's, Pershing, IN; Calvary, Cromwell, IN; Grace & Peace, Evansville; Gethsemane, Indianapolis



## October Birthdays

- 1 Lois Dowd
- 3 Stewart Hawley
- 8 Bob Krouse
- 10 Darell Yankey
- 13 Mary Lois Chamberlain
- 14 Dawn Eades
- 21 Denise Rohrer
- 24 Harry Albers  
Bradley Miller
- 25 Betty Hamlin  
Nancy Coble
- 26 Andrea Betten
- 30 Gary Spratt



## October Baptisms

- 7 Audrey Bendicsen
- 12 Pastor Amy Beitelschees-Albers
- 13 Lynn Losby
- 14 Soren Neild
- 17 Montgomery Pattison



## October Anniversaries

- 10 Lynn Losby & Bill Meinert
- 25 David & Tammy Lawrenz

## *The Eternal Flame*

During these unusual times I find comfort in thinking about the Eternal Flame. While we haven't been meeting in the sanctuary, the Eternal Flame still hangs in the same place it has for years. The flame is still glowing. It is still there even though it is out of sight. The Eternal Flame represents God's presence. Remember that while we may not see the work of God or feel His presence every day, it is just like Zion's Eternal Flame. We have not seen it in quite some time, but we know without a doubt that it is still there, hanging in the sanctuary just as God's presence is always with, in, and around us.

-Clayton D. L. Marcum

## *Returning to the Sanctuary*

Beginning Sunday, October 4 worship will be moved back upstairs to the sanctuary. We will keep our COVID precautions in place including proper social distancing and wearing masks.

## *A Note from Clayton*

After two years of working in the office for Zion I feel that it is time for me to flip the page and begin a new chapter of my life journey. It is bittersweet to announce my resignation from Zion as administrative assistant. I would like to personally thank Pastor Amy, the Zion Council, and the congregation for helping make these last two years special. While I will not be in the office anymore, I do not have any plans of finding a new church family to worship with. I'll see you in the pews.

Thank you, Zion.

Clayton D. L. Marcum

## *Communion Supplies*

If you are worshiping at home and are in need of communion supplies, please call the office or Pr. Amy so we can replenish them for you.

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