

# the herald

NEWS OF ZION LUTHERAN | ANOKA

JANUARY 2025



**ZION**  
LUTHERAN † ANOKA

## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

### In-Person Worship

5 pm (Sat)  
8, 9 & 11 am (Sun)

### Livestream Worship

9 & 11 am (Sun)

### Cable TV

10 am & 5 pm (Sun)

### Radio Broadcast

106.1 (BOB-FM)  
9:10 am (Sun)

### Scripture Readings

#### January 4-5

John 1:10-18

#### January 11-12

Luke 3:15-17; 21-22

#### January 18-19

John 2:1-11

#### January 25-26

Luke 4:14-21



**Happy New Year  
From Zion Pastors and Staff**



Back Row: Melanie Smith, Pastor Sue Wallager, Denise Lewandowski, Josh Myroniuk, Steve Dussl, Pastor Mike Pancoast, Ken Johnson; Front Row: Pastor Connie Tiede, Katie Weiland, Suzanne Gaboury, Ann Campbell, Kristine Johnson, Sharon Will, Jonathan Campbell; Not pictured: Faith Beckius, David Frank, Sylvia Goldman, Ken Hendricks, Mary Jo Gothmann, Tracy Kinn, Gavin Langaard, Lee Neitge, Greg Nelson, Deb Oas Koepsell, Adrienne Pendergrass, Callie Pendergrass, Jackie Pipenhagen, Samantha Sigafos, Sandy Steinbring, Brooke Stokes, Diane Shuldheisz, Carl Wallager, Soren Wallager, Zion Worship Team, Zion Pre-K staff

**WORSHIP**  **WITH US!**

**Worship in person Saturdays at 5 p.m. and Sundays at 8, 9 & 11 a.m.**  
**Livestream on Sundays at 9 & 11 a.m.**  
**Cable TV Channel 6 Broadcast Sundays at 10 a.m. & 5 p.m.**  
**Radio Broadcast BOB-FM 106.1 Sundays at 9:10 a.m.**

## a message from your pastors



One of these days in preparation for the church season of Epiphany, I'm going to figure out a way to rig up a hat with a light bulb on it, something that I can get to light up during the Sunday "Word For Kids" time. If you've ever seen any kind of cartoon on television, you'll recognize that whenever a character has an idea, a thought, a plot or plan, a lit lightbulb, of course, appears over that character's head. In no small way, the whole point of the season of Epiphany could be centered on that image, for throughout the season, beginning with the Magi's visitation to the Holy Family on January 6 (the DAY of Epiphany), all of our Scripture readings include "an epiphany," a realization, a dawning—a light bulb coming on—about who this child born in Bethlehem really is. We know from the Christmas story that, contrary to that contemporary Christmas song, MARY KNOWS who this child is whom she bears, the angels reveal to THE SHEPHERDS who this child is. And then beginning with the Magi, the WHOLE WORLD soon begins to learn and to have the lightbulb of Epiphany come on! But the revelation of Epiphany isn't just a literary device for the story (or stories) of the season; the stories are for the sake of our lightbulbs, as well. The gifts of the Magi—gold, frankincense, and myrrh—bear witness not only to their faith in and response to Jesus, but more importantly, invite us deeply into our faith and response as the King worthy to receive our offerings, the One worthy of worship, the One whose death and resurrection offer us eternal hope as we face the brokenness and death of this world. The voice and the dove that accompany Jesus' baptism by John in the River Jordan (the text for Sunday, January 12, the 1st Sunday after Epiphany) not only flips the switch of revelation to "on" for those in the story who might have been watching and listening, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased" (Luke 3:22); these words may as well have been said at our own baptisms, as well. Do you not know that, even at times in spite of yourself and what you do or leave undone, YOU are a beloved and well-pleasing child of God? (Here's where the lightbulb over our own heads should come on!) The abundance of wine at the wedding feast in Cana (Jesus' first public miracle, recorded in John 2 for 2nd Sunday after Epiphany on January 19) isn't only for the sake of those attending that party, as much as it is to light us with the promise and hope of Jesus as our abundant joy, even under less-than-ideal circumstances.

May the warmth and joy of Christmas continue to enlighten you with faith, hope, and love!

See you in worship!

Pastor MIKE

## Annual Meeting - Mark Your Calendars

The annual meeting of Zion Lutheran Church will take place on February 23 at 10 a.m. The meeting will be in person in our Sanctuary and will also be livestreamed. Watch for more details in the February Herald and upcoming Life Together bulletin inserts and weekly e-updates.

## Stewardship Update

Thank you to all those who have made commitments to our congregation for 2025 through our Stewardship campaign, *Building Strong Connections. Reaching Further. Together.* As of December 11, there have been 497 commitments to the General Fund totaling \$1,078,276 and 331 commitments to the Building Fund totaling \$312,365. We have also received many generous gifts for the Technology and Building Fund totaling \$75,000. These gifts will be matched by the Zion Foundation. We look forward to announcing our first renewal project soon. Thank YOU for all the ways you support the life and work of our congregation! It's not too late to turn in your commitment for 2025. Extra stewardship materials are available at the front desk.



# welcome

## Why are You Surprised?

By Colleen Nelson

When my son was two and he threw himself to the floor crying because I poked the straw into his juice box, his sister shot me the look. Evidently, I was supposed to remember my toddler wanted to do it by himself. When our dog stops to sniff at something during our walks, we say to him in jest, "Why do you have to be such a dog?" Or, why was I surprised when I found evidence of a black bear at our cabin, just days after I hung a bird feeder? Our neighbors had encountered a bear earlier that summer. Surprised? Really? What about the story of Adam and Eve? Was God caught off guard when they disobeyed God's command? Genesis 2:16-17a: "And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.'" From the beginning our Lord envisioned a utopian existence in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were created both innocent and sinless to live blissfully with God and one another in peace and harmony. It is important to distinguish between sinless and perfect, however. Humankind's imperfection centers around our ability to choose whether to obey or disobey God. This freedom to choose came to the forefront for Adam and Eve in a profound way. They succumbed to the temptation to disregard God's directive. I'm guessing God was more disappointed than surprised by their choice. Their decision to disobey God resulted in a grave consequence. The two of them were forced out of the garden and as they exited, they carried the burden of a sinful nature which continues to plague us today. So much for bliss. Fortunately, even though our existence is not even close to the sublime life God envisioned in the Garden of Eden, we live with the gift of God's love, grace and hope in all things. Now, that's a comforting thought as we greet 2025 with our New Year's resolutions still intact.

## Pastor Mike Pancoast's Installation - January 12

On Sunday, January 12 at all services, Pastor John Hulden will be installing Pastor Mike as Zion's Associate Pastor. Please join us for cake and coffee in the Cornerstone following each service as we celebrate with Pastor Mike!

## Upcoming Baptism Class - January 12

A baptism class will be held on January 12 at 12 p.m. in the Library. Please register for the class with Kristine at [kjohnson@zionanoka.org](mailto:kjohnson@zionanoka.org).

## Fare For All - January 23

JAN 23 | 4-6 PM | LOWER COMMONS

The Hot Buy for January is Chicken Wings (2 lbs.) for \$4.50! The produce pack will contain: Local Russet Potatoes (5 lb.), Yellow Onions (2 lb.), Oranges (3), Apples (3), Pears (3), Lemons (2), and Carrots (1 lb.). All for \$10!

## Cinnamon Roll Sunday - January 26

On Sunday, January 26, we will be serving fresh baked Cinnamon Rolls during coffee hour as a fundraiser for our Mission Trip to the Boundary Waters this summer. Thank you for your support of this ministry!

## Pre-K Open House - January 28

TUESDAY, JAN 28 | 5-7 PM | ZION PRE-K

Meet our teachers, see our classrooms and find out more about Zion Pre-K. Have a soon-to-be-5 year old but not sure about kindergarten? Come learn about our High 5's program. Need Pre-K 5 days a week? We have that option along with many other class choices. Share this information with your friends, family, and neighbors!

# welcome and grow

## Consider Electronic Options for Newsletter and Giving

In our ongoing efforts to be good stewards of both our resources and the environment, we are asking you to consider two simple, yet impactful changes that can help our church save valuable funds: subscribing to our Herald Newsletter electronically and giving your offerings electronically.

### Why Make the Switch?

- **Save on Printing and Postage:** As you know, producing and mailing physical newsletters and offering envelopes takes time and money. The costs of printing, postage, and handling continue to rise. By receiving our Herald Newsletter electronically and giving online, you will help Zion Lutheran Church save significant amounts each year—funds that can be redirected to support our church's mission and outreach programs.
- **Convenience and Accessibility:** Electronic newsletters can be accessed on your computer, tablet, or smartphone, providing you with quick and easy access wherever you are. No more waiting for the mail or worrying about lost newsletters! Plus, our digital editions often come with clickable links, providing you with direct access to event details, and more.
- **Giving Made Simple:** Electronic giving is a fast, secure, and convenient way to contribute to Zion Lutheran Church. Whether you choose to give weekly or as a one-time donation, our secure online giving platform allows you to set up recurring donations and contribute from anywhere. By choosing electronic giving, you help us streamline our financial process.

### How to Switch?

- To receive the Herald electronically, call or send an email to Kristine Johnson at [kjohnson@zionanoka.org](mailto:kjohnson@zionanoka.org).
- To start giving electronically, call or email to Tracy Kinn at [tkinn@zionanoka.org](mailto:tkinn@zionanoka.org).

## Meals on Wheels

Over 300 Anoka County residents are served a hot meal every weekday by Meals on Wheels. Meals are picked up at the Meals on Wheels Coon Rapids office and delivered to recipients' doorsteps by volunteers. Volunteers are needed and welcomed! Please contact Suzanne [sgaboury@zionanoka.org](mailto:sgaboury@zionanoka.org) or 763-421-4656 to be added to Zion's list or call the Meals on Wheels Office at 763-264-4041.

## Noisy Offering for Camp Ministries

Thank you to everyone who brought in their Noisy Offering in December! We gathered \$444.20 which will go toward our camp ministries. The next weekend our Noisy Offering buckets will be out is January 4 and 5. We will also have a bucket at the Welcome Desk if you would like to drop off your Noisy Offering during our office hours.

## Men of Zion and Friends Event - January 16

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16 | 10 AM-12 PM | ZION CLC

On January 16, Men of Zion and Friends will be hosting Corn Hole (Bean Bag Toss) in the CLC. Following the games, we will all be going out to lunch. If you have a Corn Hole Game, please bring it along (in case we need it). No need to sign up!



## Upcoming Sunday Adult Faith Forums

Grab a cup of coffee and join us Sundays at 10 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

- January 5: Epipha-WHAT? A Brief Explanation of the Season of Epiphany - Dr. Jonathan Campbell
- January 12: Islam 101 - Dr. Tam Saidi from the Islamic Resource Group, St. Paul, MN
- January 19: Islam 101 Part Two
- January 26: The Art of Zion - Tim Sheie

## Small Group Ministry - The Chosen Season 2

We will be resuming our Bible study by viewing and discussing Season 2 of *The Chosen*, the dramatic video miniseries based on the Gospels. Each episode runs anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour or so. PLUS, each week we'll have some time for discussion and study of the Bible itself.

### SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY

Week of January 5: Special Christmas Episode and Episode 1 "Thunder"

Week of January 12: Episode 2 "I Saw You"

Week of January 19: Episode 3 "Matthew 4:24"

Week of January 26: Episode 4 "The Perfect Opportunity"

### TIMES AND LOCATIONS

A - Mondays at 1 p.m. in the Legacy Room led by Pastor Sue Wallager

B - Tuesdays at 8:45 a.m. in either the Legacy Room or Fellowship Hall led by Pastor Mike Pancoast

C - Wednesdays at 10 a.m. in the Legacy Room led by Pastor Connie Tiede

D - Wednesdays at 6 p.m. in the Legacy Room led by Pastor Mike Pancoast

Unlike Season 1, we will not be using a pre-published study guide but rather will rely on the "Easter Eggs & Notes" that Pastor Mike produces. Sign up at the Welcome Desk so we know how many weekly resources to produce. If you were not a part of the Season 1 group and would like to attend, PLEASE DO. You might know the story better than you think! Or, if you'd like to catch up and watch Season 1 on your own, ALL SEASONS of *The Chosen* can be found FREE and WITHOUT COMMERCIALS at <https://watch.thechosen.tv/>.

## Boundary Waters Mission Trip - Registration Ends January 8

Youth who have completed grades 8-12 by the summer of 2025 are invited to join us for the summer youth trip to Wilderness Canoe Base in the Boundary Waters. This trip is designed for all who are ready for adventure, eager to grow deeper in faith, and interested in experiencing God's creation in one of the most beautiful places in the world. We'll be camping, canoeing, and doing service projects at the base with our group. July 16-20, 2025. Scan QR code at the right to register on Realm by January 8.



## Lutheran Late Night - January 17

Join us at Zion from 7-10 p.m. on Friday, January 17 for Lutheran Late Night! This event is for middle and high school students and functions like a lock-in, but you go home at the end of the night. Snacks will be provided, and night games will be played. Friends welcome, please register here <https://cutt.ly/llnjan>.

## Zion Pages Book Group - January 27

On January 27, at 6:30 p.m. in the Library, we will be discussing *West with Giraffes: A Novel* by Lynda Rutledge. All are welcome to attend.

# caring for each other

## From the Zion Addiction and Awareness Ministry (ZAAM)

In January, ZAAM will be working to bring more awareness and education about addiction and recovery. We are hoping to host a speaker from Frogtown Cafe, an organization run by volunteers who host "Recovery Circles". Hopefully, increased awareness on our part will lead us to noticing the need and the programs that already exist locally. We also continue to add books and pamphlets to our library which are free to take out. In addition, we are learning about grants and services available through Anoka County that we could apply for—all of which relate to addiction, mental health and healthy relationships. A big concern everywhere is the impact that drug and alcohol use have on youth. For example, according to the Minnesota Department of Health, "Early alcohol use, especially binge drinking, is associated with poorer social and educational outcomes during high school, as well as problems later in life." How can we as a congregation be a buffer to such dire outcomes? How can we cultivate the values in our youth that helps them make good choices? A wish for the future..."I pray that I may start each new day with a clean blackboard and write upon it only what is good for me." from *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon*

## January Grief Support Group

TUE, JAN 7, 14, 21 & 28 | 11 AM | FIRESIDE ROOM

All are welcome to attend this grief support group. For more information or if you have questions. Contact Pastor Sue at [swallager@zionanoka.org](mailto:swallager@zionanoka.org).

## Thank You Radio Broadcast Donors

Every Sunday morning at 9:10 a.m., Zion's worship service is broadcast on BOB-FM (106.1). Our radio broadcast covers a good portion of Minnesota and reaches several hundred listeners each Sunday, including many who do not have internet capability. Special gifts to support Zion's Radio Broadcast Fund are welcome. Gifts may be given in memory of a loved one or in honor of a special occasion, such as a wedding anniversary. To make a gift to the Radio Broadcast Fund, note "radio broadcast" on the memo line of your check. If it is in memory of a loved one or in honor of an anniversary or birthday, enclose a note or post-it.

Dianne Carlson  
Judy Bendiske  
Lyle & Marlene Willock  
Mitchell Miller  
Tina Erickson

Kristine Johnson  
Craig Bakken  
Lois Peterson

Cara Fish in memory of Bob Kimball  
Mike & Arlene Kelly in memory of Bob Kimball  
Bev Fraser in honor of Dottie Carlson's 97th birthday  
Chaplain David Holmes in memory of Lyle Anderson and Phil & Ellen Clark

## about our people

### Baptisms

Dec 1 - Brooke Sues  
Dec 7 - Eloise Sternal

### Deaths

Hal Maenke  
Jerre Olson  
Nancy Johnson  
August "Duke"  
Grosslein

### New Members

David & Karla Slovick  
Joelle Sternal  
Rhonda Fochs

# caring for our world

## From Zion's Creation Care Team - A Reflection on Plastic Recycling

Just think—Zion collected a thousand pounds of plastic bags, wrappers, and more, which may not seem like a big deal until one stops to think that each item collected (most of them, anyway) weigh fractions of a gram! This was a HUGE accomplishment, and special thanks need to be extended to **Bill Travis** and **Ellen Johnson** for being our Creation Care Heroes for collecting, weighing, and transporting our weekly collections.

It seems to me that the accomplishment isn't just the collection of a thousand pounds of plastic but more so in the living out of God's intended purpose for us as human beings in relationship to the creation God has given us to take care of! The very first words God speaks to the humans created in the image of God delineate this God-given purpose of care: *"Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."* (Gen. 1:28). This language of "multiply," "subdue," and "have dominion over" may seem like a carte blanche license to do as we please with this creation.

But when one reads even more of the Bible, allowing the Bible to interpret itself over and against our misinterpretations, we get a much fuller and certainly a more care-oriented vision from God for our place in creation. For example, **Psalm 72**, a royal psalm likely used for some celebration or commemoration of Israel's king (a coronation, or a birthday, perhaps) includes some of the exact same words, language, and fuller vision from God. In describing what the king's reign should be like over his people—again, using the same words, language, and vision given to the newly created humans in Genesis 1—far from the expectation that king would do whatever he darn well pleases, we encounter language like this instead: *"May the king be like rain that falls on mown grass, like showers that water the earth...For he delivers the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper... He has pity on the weak and needy, and saves the lives of the needy...From oppression and violence the king redeems their life; and precious is their blood in his sight."* (72:6, 12-14). Here is a vision for care, gentleness, and responsibility, especially for those who are most vulnerable, which very well could be our planet.

**What if, from the get-go, THAT is what God has in mind for those created in the image of God?** If that's the case, it would seem, then, that care of creation, especially in its current vulnerabilities, isn't just kind of a minor thing that maybe, perhaps, if we get around to it, or if it interests us enough, we actually do. Perhaps being created in the image of God, the gracious King of the Universe, means that care of creation isn't just an occasional "and other duties as necessary" part of our job description. Perhaps it IS our job description, whether that care of creation includes caring for other humans or caring for the natural world.

This past spring, I read about "the Great Pacific Garbage Patch" that stretches roughly the distance between Hawaii and California and is about the size of the state of Alaska! It's made up largely of plastic but includes other debris and waste from Asia, North and South America. Fortunately, organizations like [The Ocean Cleanup](#) are developing technologies and techniques for cleaning up the Great Pacific Garbage Patch and other similar islands of human waste. (You can click on the link to learn more about The Ocean Cleanup.) When we read about such huge, global problems, I suspect our response can go one of two directions: either we can be paralyzed by the enormity of such a problem; or, we can be motivated even just to do our small part. Admittedly, 1,000 pounds of plastic compared to the Great Pacific Garbage Patch is just a drop in the ocean--see what I did there?! But every little bit helps as we seek to be like rain that falls on mown grass, like gentle showers that water the earth.

True enough, we are no longer collecting these plastics here at the Church. The Creation Care Team's prayer is that you have begun to develop habits in collecting this waste yourself and dropping it off at other locales connected with NexTrex (the collector of the plastic and manufacturer of the park bench we'll be receiving). Those locations include all area Coborn's, Cub, and Kohl's stores! Thanks for doing your part!

On behalf of the Zion Creation Care Team, Pastor Mike



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**ZION**  
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A WELCOMING FAITH COMMUNITY.  
GROWING. CARING. SERVING.

## Zion Pre-K Welcomes the Baby Jesus



Our Pre-K students celebrated Christmas with a program of songs for their family and friends. What a great season to share the news of Jesus' birth with children. Happy New Year!



### WELCOME

You are invited, you are welcome to come and experience God's love at Zion Lutheran Church.

### CONTACT US

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