



CONNECT

Monthly Newsletter of Zion Lutheran Church

You don't need a mirror to tell your beauty. Just look up to God and he'll tell you that you're worth more than what a piece of glass tells you.

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February 2023

Living God's Call

Weekly Announcement Emails

In addition to this monthly newsletter and ministry specific emails, the weekly announcements are available by email which is sent on Thursdays and also available at ZionBuffalo.org/announcements. Printed announcements are available upon request from the information desk for those who do not have internet access.

Connect Card

If you have questions, prayer requests, a new mailing address, etc., please fill out a connect card online at ZionBuffalo.org/card or find a card in the pew racks. The same card can be used to record your participation in Holy Communion.

The Baptism Class

Anyone wishing to schedule a baptism is asked to attend a class prior to the date of the baptism. Expectant parents, as well as those who already are parents, may attend the class. Scheduling of baptisms will take place at the class.

The next classes are Sunday, February 12, and Sunday, April 23, at 11:45am. Register at ZionBuffalo.org/Baptism or by calling the office.

Blessing Closet Distribution

Happy Valentine's Day from the Blessing Closet

BY ROGER & SANDY BRENNY, COORDINATORS

The next Blessing Closet Distribution, to be held in Trinity Hall on Saturday, February 11, from 9am-1pm, will include a Valentine's Day celebration! We have partnered with the Buffalo Food Shelf who will provide a food distribution box containing bakery and produce food items to all families who attend. For the children who attend, we have free clothing, and a choice of a toy, stuffed animal, candy, and various other items to help celebrate Valentine's Day.

The Blessing Closet provides free clothing to families with children ages infant to 18 years. There are no income or residency requirements to qualify for free clothing. No appointments are needed for The Blessing Closet.

You can help this mission by donating slightly used clothing or joining the volunteer group who administer this program. Call 763.317.6052 for more information. Funds to help support the Blessing Closet can be donated by checking the 'local missions' box on Zion giving envelopes or selecting 'Blessing Closet' in the subfund box at ZionBuffalo.org/missiongiving.

Offering Envelope Supply Issue

BY STEVE PETERSON, FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATOR

On Friday, January 6, we communicated with our offering envelope provider about not yet receiving our 2023 January/February envelope packets. Our provider quickly responded by email informing us that due to supply chain issues and their inability to add employees needed, they will not be fulfilling our January/February envelope orders. They determined that if they tried to play "catchup" it would jeopardize their ability to fulfill future orders in a timely manner. Therefore they stopped the production of January/February orders. By removing that work from their schedule they are able to move forward with future orders in a timely manner. Therefore they will resume their timely deliveries of future packets starting with our March/April envelope packets that you will receive by March 1, 2023. They are deeply apologetic for this inconvenience.

Here are some suggestions on how to be sure your offerings are received and correctly processed:

- Pew envelopes are available in the sanctuary, in the office, and at the information desk on Sundays. If you wish to use a pew envelope or your own envelope from home please designate which fund(s) you wish your gift to be credited. If you know it, please include your envelope number.

(Offering Envelopes continued on page 12)



Viktoriia Kurylenko

Ukrainian Sponsorship Opportunity

UKRAINIAN SUPPORT GROUP

God has presented our congregation with the opportunity to become the official sponsor for another Ukrainian who is attempting to escape her war-torn country. Viktoriia Kurylenko is a 28-year-old single woman who is a cousin of Yevhen Hrytsai, a member of the family that arrived in Montrose eight months ago. Although we were not their official sponsors, we continue to assist him and his family as they have relocated to the Twin City area. Yevhen found employment with Cargill and the others have received their social security numbers and work permits. They are thankful to be here and for our ongoing support.

Viktoriia is a college graduate who has taught English, German, and Ukrainian. Since the schools have been disrupted, she has been tutoring children in Kyiv. She is one of nine million Ukrainians who are facing the winter with limited power. Russia's continued bombing of civilian targets, power stations, and infrastructure has made life a nightmare for many.

The Zion Foundation has indicated a willingness to make a substantial pledge to seed the fundraising effort on behalf of Viktoriia and the other Ukrainians who may need our help. The Council has agreed that the funds will be overseen by Zion's Ukrainian support group and will be dispersed as needed through the Global Mission Committee for her plane ticket and initial expenses to get her started on a new life in America.

A special emphasis for fundraising has been coordinated with the Global Mission Committee and will include Sunday announcements, a special offering, a youth event decorating Ukrainian Easter eggs, a silent auction of an original Ukrainian Easter egg, and hopefully an informational meeting between services with Yevhen and his wife Katya.

Yevhen and his family have agreed to share their apartment with Viktoriia until other housing arrangements can be made. Once she arrives, we will coordinate efforts to complete more paperwork, investigate programs for which she is eligible, and help her find employment. A used vehicle is often one of the most pressing needs, but we will keep the congregation apprised.

Viktoriia's paperwork was underway, when she learned in January that her boyfriend, previously taken hostage and thought to have been killed by the Russians may still be alive. Everything is on hold for now. In the meantime, we ask for your prayers for Viktoriia and her countrymen.

Financial contributions can be submitted to Zion using a pew envelope marked "Refugee Families" or online at ZionBuffalo.org/refugees.

All Lenten Self-Denial donations will go to fund the Global Mission's ongoing monetary commitment to Redeemer Lutheran Church, All Kids Can Learn/Village of Hope, and Mission Jamaica.



Harvest of Hands

BY JOY ARENS, COORDINATOR

Thank you for all your support for our event in November 2022. We made over \$14,000 at our 2022 event. FANTASTIC!!!!

Part of the proceeds, \$5,000, from the 2022 event will go to the Buffalo Food Shelf which will be matched by the Nelson Lodge No. 135 of Buffalo. The total donation to the Buffalo Food Shelf will be \$10,000. Additional donations will be made to a global hunger project this year.

We are geared up to complete many projects in 2022. Craft group works on a variety of projects throughout the year. The group will be organizing our storage room. We will work on resin projects in February. The group meets on the second and fourth Wednesday (February 8 and 22) in the Wilderness Room at 7pm.

We are happy to say that the brunch will be back at our 2023 event. The Youth Group has volunteered to sponsor the event. YEAH!!

Harvest of Hands is a dedicated group that works together to help rid the world of hunger.

Vision Statement:

In an environment of growing faith and loving camaraderie, Harvest of Hands sponsors events and creates products for sale that will help alleviate both local and world hunger.

Mission Statement:

With a broad partnership of known and unknown entities, Harvest of Hands is committed to end both local and worldwide hunger, one meal at a time.

We encourage you to join one of our sessions for fun, fellowship, and a sense of accomplishment.

Dima's mother is looking for a donation of a dresser and nightstand. Please use the form at ZionBuffalo.org/refugees to contact the Ukrainian Support group if you can help with this need or to check for new needs.

Celebrating on Sundays



ReLENTless Pursuit

By PASTOR BAHE

[“The Hound of Heaven”](#) is a long poem written by Francis Thompson, which describes God as the One who continually seeks the writer even though the writer keeps running from Him. It echoes the words from Psalm 139:

Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you
are there.

To know there is nowhere you can go to flee from God, is that a comforting thought? Or a disturbing thought? For Thompson, it was a dreadful thought, until he finally surrendered to God’s relentless love.

To be pursued can be a frightening thing, conjuring up images of someone chasing after you in a dream. But, being pursued by someone you love summons an entirely different feeling of warmth and joy. To be pursued by pure love with a relentless certainty by a God full of grace is our fate. There is nowhere we can go where we are not known by God, in fact, even before we are born, we are known by God [Psalm 139].

To be so fully known, to be so fully certain of God’s love is a reoccurring miracle in our lives. And yet, we are like wandering sheep. The littlest things distract us and we wander off in every direction in a relentless pursuit of something we can hardly name. And most of the things we pursue are poor substitutes for the life that God envisions for us.

As we enter the Lenten season on February 22nd with Ash Wednesday, we will enter into a relentless pursuit together. We will wonder together what it means that we can go nowhere without God. We will ask what it means to have a God who “hounds” us. Through story, Bible study opportunities, daily devotions, and worship experiences, we will pursue the truth that God is relentless. And we will acknowledge that our questions, our longings, our wanderings can be relentless as well.

Perhaps by the end of Lent, we may agree with Andy McIlvain, who writes in his blog *Enacted Word*, that

“God deserves more than our attention; He deserves our affections and focus. He doesn’t just want us to listen to Him. He desires us to know Him. He wants us to pursue Him.”

This Lenten season, I hope you will commit to a relentless pursuit of your relationship with God. We have a variety of experiences available for your Lenten pursuits and pray that you will join in as this community of faith relentlessly rejoices in the height, depth, width, length, and strength of God’s love [Ephesians 3].



Ash Wednesday

February 22

12pm Ash Wednesday Worship with Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion

5pm Pasta Supper

6pm Ash Wednesday Worship with Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion

Lenten Wednesdays

March 1-29

12pm Lenten Worship

6-6:30pm Lenten Worship

6:30-7:15pm Lenten Soup Supper

7:15-8:15pm Bible Studies (including new options for parents and for young adults).

Dear Heavenly Father,
like a hound you pursue us with your
grace and love. There is promise in
that, but also a reminder that we need
to surrender. This year, during lent,
may we embrace your pursuit of us
like a child waking from a nap
yearning for the reassuring warmth of
a loving parent’s arms.
Amen.

Lenten Studies for Teens and Parents

BY TAMMY ZUMBUSCH & HOLLY HUSOM,
DIRECTORS OF YOUTH MINISTRY

ReLENTless Pursuit of Joy

We are incredibly excited about a couple of opportunities we have coming up for teens and their families. The youth of Zion are invited every Wednesday during Lent (March 1st-March 29th) to participate in a series called; *The ReLENTless Pursuit of Joy*. We will be following Zion's Lenten theme as we remember the idea that God relentlessly pursues us as we relentlessly pursue Him and seek out answers to faith questions including but not limited to; How to Find Joy in a Troubled World.

Unfortunately, the United States is experiencing a teenage mental-health crisis. From 2009-2021, the percentage of American teenagers who say they feel persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness rose from 26-44%, according to a new CDC study. The remarkable rise of teenage sadness doesn't feel that mysterious, does it? The pressures of school and sports, world stressors, social media.

Joy is a gift from God, but we have a part to play. Once our Joy has been stolen, how do we recover? We will talk about practical ways to reclaim our joy. Dig into the Bible to find the tools that will help us to trust in God's goodness and live a fuller, more joy-filled life! We will meet in the Youth Room from 7:15-8:15. This series is open to both middle schoolers and high schoolers.

ReLENTless Pursuit of Your Teen's Heart

That's not all!! This year we are beyond excited to offer an additional opportunity for parents of teens entitled *ReLENTless Pursuit of Your Teen's Heart*. We will be welcoming keynote speakers from the community with expertise in many current topics involving teens. Raising teens can be challenging and can sometimes feel lonely. Come and get to know other parents in the same boat, we are all in this together.

We love these glorious, sarcastic, messy, and magnificent creatures-join us, get some inspiration and encouragement as we work together to relentlessly pursue our teen's hearts!

ReLENTless Pursuit of Living Faith

Lexi Goos and Ellen Schmidt will lead a Young Adult Bible Study for young adults (18-35 give or take), on Wednesdays during Lent (March 1-29) from 7:15-8:15pm. Read and discuss the book of James to gain insight and wisdom on how to live our day-to-day life as faith-filled followers of Jesus. All reading will be completed during the Bible study (no outside reading requested), and a structure for discussion and reflection will be provided. Other young adults outside of Zion are welcome to join too, so bring friends!



Sunday Worship Services

8:30am: Traditional Worship (with livestream)

8:30 Sunday School

9:30am: Coffee Fellowship / Adult Education / Family Events

10:30am: Contemporary Worship (with drive-in)

10:30am: Sunday School

For drive-in worship at 10:30, please drive through the canopy at the front of the church to pick up a bulletin etc., before parking in the back parking lot and tuning your car radio to FM 87.9.

Holy Communion will be part of all worship services on the first and third Sundays of the month. All members receiving communion are asked to complete an electronic communion card at ZionBuffalo.org/card or text CARD to 763-335-1245.

If you are attending the online worship service, we know you won't have the exact same elements that we use when we are in worship in the sanctuary. Gather any variety of wine or fruit juice and any kind of bread product.



Lenten Devotional

Members have contributed to a Lenten Devotional which will be available in print and online by Sunday, February 19.

Luther Seminary also has a daily devotional available to download or read online, which can be found at luthersem.edu/lent.

Connecting with Care

Baptisms

December 11

Hayden Rhea Schnese
Adley Caroline Sjolín

January 8

Bria Marie Barclay
Adeline James Youngren

Funerals

December 17

Clifton Stedje

December 29

Roger Braatz

Active Military

Vinnie Pecarina

Stationed in Alaska

Hope Kellerhuis

Stationed at Fort Drum, NY

Michael Christensen

Stationed in Virginia Beach, VA

Alexis Nichols

Stationed in Georgia

Adam Hartung

Stationed at FE Warren AFB, WY

Will Dobbins

Stationed in Hawaii

Luc Persson

Stationed at Aviano AFB, Italy

Jordan Thompson

Serving in the National Guard

Tyler Marr

Serving in the Air Force

Ben Pecarina

Air Force Reserves

Brianna Marschel

Serving in the Army

Christian Marschel

Serving in the Army

Collin Lesch

Serving in the Army.

*And members whose names cannot be
published for security reasons*

Farewell Eldor!

Although Eldor Jordan is retiring from his custodial position at Zion, he and Nancy will still be a part of the Zion family as members. Throughout his time on staff as a custodial member, Eldor has brought many smiles and times of laughter with his sense of humor. Thank you, Eldor, for all of your work in a job that often seems thankless, but is so important for our warm welcome to people as they come to Zion! We wish you well and pray for all kinds of joy and happiness in your retirement! God's blessings to you and yours today and always.



Ten Commandments Study Bible Study from Gather Magazine

Some might say the Old Testament commands Remember the Sabbath and Honor Your Folks seem outdated and quaint. After all, didn't Jesus routinely break the Sabbath? Didn't Jesus (on occasion) talk back to his mother? Yet these commandments are far from outdated. Find out how these commands offer a source of peace and inspiration in today's often hectic and generationally segregated society and church.

Zion women will discuss the 3rd and 4th commandments in this month's Ten Commandments Bible study from the ELCA women's ministry Gather Magazine. Groups meet on Thursday, February 16, (Rebecca Circle, continuing on the 3rd Thursday of each month) and Tuesday, February 21, at 9:30am (Naomi Circle, continuing on the third Tuesday of each month). Meetings are at Zion each month and no sign up is needed.



Council Update

By CHUCK ZUMBUSCH, COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Entering a new year always brings some changes, new calendars for the wall, new priorities, and a new group of Council members. I was humbled, while also very pleased to be elected to serve as this year's President of the Council along with Ashley Mattson, as the Vice President. Deb Rude and Joan Halderson agreed to continue the great work in their officer position as Secretary and Treasurer, respectively. We have five new members, in Cheryl Bohnen, Andy Kohls, Josie LaFave, Tamara Wuollet, and Dale Schmidt and we are all looking forward to partnering with them in their new roles as we enter 2023. I'd like to thank the outgoing members Jameson Wakefield, Kris Harlan, Nick Sjolín, Dirk Foster, and Wanda Weber for their time and contributions during each of their terms.

As we start the year Zion, I think it is important to take a step back and perform an assessment on where we are and set the course for where we want to go. My initial thoughts are it's a wonderful time to be at Zion. We have called Pastor Bahe to lead us, there is a constant buzz of activity within the church of all ages and an excitement is building on what is to come and envisioning what we can accomplish together.

There are a couple items on the to-do list for 2023 that we as a congregation should achieve, such as calling and installing an Associate Pastor. In conjunction with the new Council at our first meeting, I'll ask to identify other items to add to the list and then we will put the plans in place to achieve them together.

I am looking forward to the future here at Zion and kindly ask for your participation and your prayers.

Tamara Wuollet

Meet the Council

Tamara was elected to the Church Council in December, and will serve 2023-2025.

Konrad and I have been married fourteen years. We have two daughters, Taylor (13) and Lexi (11). Our dog is Coco, and he brings so much joy to our lives. Konrad works construction as a hardwood floor specialist. In his line of work he refinishes, installs, and designs hardwood floors. Taylor is in 8th grade and Lexi is in 6th grade at Buffalo Community Middle School. Taylor is on the

(Tamara continued on page 12)



Sunday Welcome Crews

Individuals and families are welcome! Help us make Zion a place of generous hospitality!

- Sign up to serve on a Sunday Welcome Crew, hosting one Sunday per month. Tasks include greeting, ushering, and hosting coffee fellowship. Sign up here.
- If you would like to help sometimes but are not ready to commit to once each month, you may sign up here whenever it is convenient.
- There are also opportunities for setting up, serving, or cleaning up communion.

For more information, contact kim@zionbuffalo.org or 763-682-1245 ext. 103.

Wednesday Suppers

On Wednesday nights, families, confirmation students, musicians, committee members, and people of all ages get together for a Zion family meal in Fellowship Hall. Seven supper teams rotate, giving variety to the menu each week. Serving runs from 5-6pm, with a freewill donation.

This Month's Menus Are:

- February 1: Chicken
 - February 8: Tacos
 - February 15: Burgers
 - February 22 (Ash Wednesday): Pasta
- Lenten Soup Suppers (March 1-29) will be served between Lenten worship and Bible study groups, from 6:30-7:15pm.

Save the Date!

Lutheran Night at the Twins

The next Lutheran Night at the Twins will be Tuesday, August 15.



February 2023

Wednesday February 1

7:00am 50+ Men's Bible Study
9:00am Working Party Fellowship
2:30pm Kids' Place
3:00pm Ring Forth
4:00pm Class Ring
4:30pm Youth Open Gym
5:00pm Wednesday Supper: Chicken
5:15pm Elevate Choir
6:00pm Lifted Choir
6:30pm Altared Choir
6:30pm Joyful Ringers
6:30pm Confirmation
7:15pm Senior Choir
8:00pm High School Youth Group

Thursday February 2

8:00am Men Seeking Wisdom Bible Study
9:30am Buffalo Area Dementia Friends
5:00pm Communion Class

Friday February 3

Saturday February 4

9:00am Communion Class

Sunday February 5

Holy Communion at all worship services

8:30am Traditional Worship Service (with Livestream)
8:30am Sunday School
9:30am Executive Committee
9:30am Coffee Fellowship
10:30am Contemporary Worship (w/ drive-in)
10:30am Sunday School

Monday February 6

9:00am Quilters
6:00pm First Sunday Rehearsal

Tuesday February 7

9:15am Storytime with Jesus
11:00am Staff Meeting
4:00pm Fare for All

Wednesday February 8

7:00am 50+ Men's Bible Study
9:00am Working Party Fellowship
2:30pm Kids' Place
3:00pm Ring Forth
4:00pm Class Ring
4:30pm Youth Open Gym
5:00pm Wednesday Supper: Tacos
5:15pm Elevate Choir
5:30pm Foundation Meeting
6:00pm Lifted Choir
6:30pm Altared Choir
6:30pm Joyful Ringers
6:30pm Confirmation
7:00pm Harvest of Hands Crafts
8:00pm High School Youth Group

Thursday February 9

8:00am Newsletter Deadline
8:00am Men Seeking Wisdom Bible Study
9:30am Buffalo Area Dementia Friends
1:00pm Blessing Closet Distribution Set-Up

Friday February 10

Saturday February 11

9:00am Blessing Closet Distribution

Sunday February 12

Camp Sunday
8:30am Traditional Worship Service (with Livestream)
8:30am Sunday School
9:30am Coffee Fellowship
10:30am Contemporary Worship (w/ drive-in)
10:30am Sunday School
11:30am Baptism Class

Monday February 13

9:00am Quilters
9:00am Women's Ministry Committee
6:00pm First Sunday Rehearsal

Tuesday February 14

St. Valentine's Day

5:30pm Children & Family Ministry Team Meeting
5:30pm Youth Board Meeting
6:00pm Outreach Committee
7:00pm Finance Committee Meeting

Wednesday February 15

7:00am 50+ Men's Bible Study
9:00am Working Party Fellowship
2:30pm Kids' Place
3:00pm Ring Forth
4:00pm Class Ring
4:30pm Youth Open Gym
5:00pm Wednesday Supper: Burgers
5:15pm Elevate Choir
6:00pm Lifted Choir
6:30pm Altared Choir
6:30pm Joyful Ringers
6:30pm Confirmation
7:00pm Church Council Meeting
7:15pm Senior Choir
8:00pm High School Youth Group

Thursday February 16

8:00am Men Seeking Wisdom Bible Study
9:30am Buffalo Area Dementia Friends
10:00am Rebecca Circle

Friday February 17

6:00pm Middle School Fun Night

Saturday February 18

Sunday February 19

Holy Communion at all worship services
8:30am Traditional Worship Service (with Livestream)
8:30am Sunday School
9:30am Coffee Fellowship
10:30am Contemporary Worship (w/ drive-in)
10:30am Sunday School



Monday February 20
Washington's Birthday

9:00am Quilters
6:00pm First Sunday Rehearsal

Tuesday February 21

9:30am Naomi Circle
11:00am Staff Meeting
5:30pm Stewardship Committee
7:00pm Personnel Committee Meeting

Wednesday February 22

Ash Wednesday

7:00am 50+ Men's Bible Study
9:00am Working Party Fellowship
10:00am Newsletter Assembly
12:00pm Ash Wednesday Worship
2:30pm Kids' Place
3:00pm Ring Forth
4:00pm Class Ring
4:30pm Youth Open Gym
5:00pm Wednesday Supper: Pasta
6:00pm Ash Wednesday Worship
7:00pm Harvest of Hands Crafts
7:15pm Senior Choir
8:00pm High School Youth Group

Thursday February 23

8:00am Men Seeking Wisdom Bible Study
9:30am Buffalo Area Dementia Friends
6:00pm Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

Friday February 24

Saturday February 25

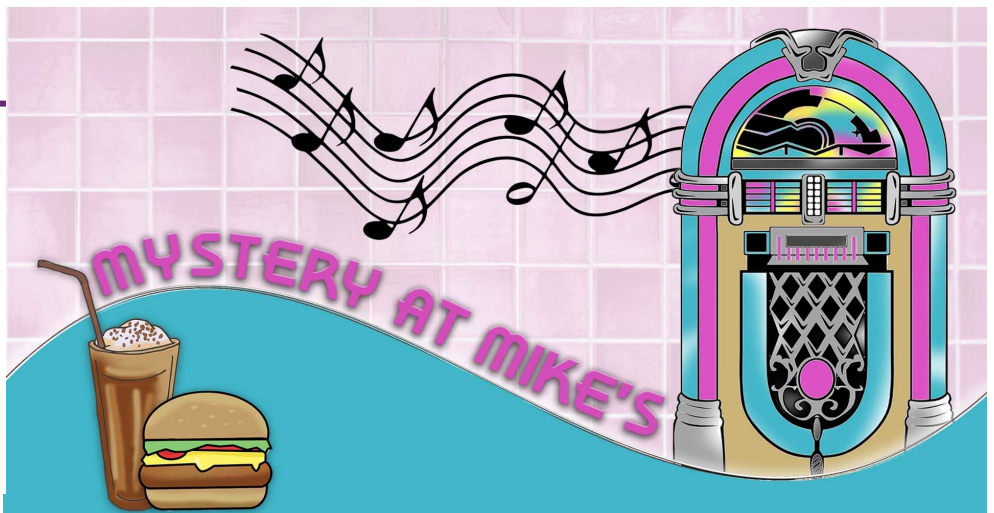
Sunday February 26

8:30am Traditional Worship Service (with
Livestream)
8:30am Sunday School
9:30am Coffee Fellowship
10:30am Contemporary Worship (w/ drive-in)
10:30am Sunday School

Monday February 27

9:00am Quilters
6:00pm First Sunday Rehearsal

Tuesday February 28



SATURDAY, MARCH 4

5:30pm

*Social hour with appetizers & punch
Silent auction*

6:30pm seating for 7pm

Dinner theater



Adults \$20 / kids \$10 / 6 for \$100

ZIONBUFFALO.ORG/GALA

A fundraiser for Zion Youth Ministries

Finance & Stewardship

Memorial Gifts Received

A gift to the Memorial Fund in memory of Clifton Stedje, from Del Haag.

A gift to the Zion Foundation in memory of Arlene Polak, from Robert and Thea Adams.

Gifts to the Zion Foundation in memory of Clifton Stedje, from family and friends, Marlys Gillund, Thomas & Ann Baker, and Marlys Corhouse.

Thrivent Choice Dollars

Thrivent Choice lets many Thrivent members direct Choice Dollars® to an organization of their choice. Please consider designating Zion as the recipient of your available Choice Dollars® at thrivent.com/thriventchoice.

Have You Remembered

Zion Lutheran Church Foundation in your estate planning?

When you update your will, trust, or asset beneficiaries, please consider including a gift for ministry, using the following legal directive:

"I bequeath ___ % of my estate (or my fund) to Zion Lutheran Church Foundation, located at 1200 Hwy 25 S, Buffalo, Minnesota, EIN #41-1385843."

Foundation gifts are welcome at any time. A gift to the Zion Foundation keeps on giving.

For more information, call 763.682.1245, visit ZionBuffalo.org/foundation, or email foundation@zionbuffalo.org.

Nursery Position Open

The Nursery Director ensures a safe, nurturing nursery environment where children see, hear, and feel the love of God; and parents feel confident that their child/ren receive the highest quality of care and ministry. Commitment is up to 10 hrs/week, including Sunday mornings and special events as needed. Look for more information and application instructions at ZionBuffalo.org/employment.

Financial Report

By JOHN LINDLIEF, FINANCE COMMITTEE

Zion finished 2022 with some excellent financial news. Our average weekly General Fund income for year was about \$15,500 which is about \$400 per week greater than we had in 2021. This represents an overall increase of 2.66%. Our December giving to the General Fund was up over 14% compared to the same month in 2021. Expenses for the month were about \$4,500 less than a year ago. However for the entire year, our expenses ended up 8.8% higher than last year. This amounts to an increase of about \$61,000. For the year our General Fund expenses exceeded our income by about \$8,000.

The Building Fund continues to be stable. Even though our December income for the Building Fund was down by about \$8,000 compared to that received in December of 2021, we ended the year with total yearly income exceeding our mortgage payment by over \$4,000.

The Finance Committee senses that we are continuing to not only recover, but grow in our congregation's commitment to its mission. While we started the year slowly, our giving has indicated that we are moving forward. We hope that this will continue as we take on new financial challenges of adding a second pastor and filling the remaining staff positions. Thanks to all of you for making this happen.



Donating Assets Maximize Your Impact

By MIKE DAVIS, STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

**"It's what you sow that multiplies,
not what you keep in the barn."**

~ Adrian Rogers

Donating monetarily to Zion and/or any charitable organization is great. But did you know, there may be ways to significantly increase your impact by donating appreciated assets such as stocks, mutual funds and bonds? There are a few benefits of donating the asset directly instead of first selling and converting to dollars. First, you can potentially avoid the capital gains tax you would incur if the asset was sold before donating the proceeds. Second, you may claim a fair market value charitable deduction for the tax year the gift was made.



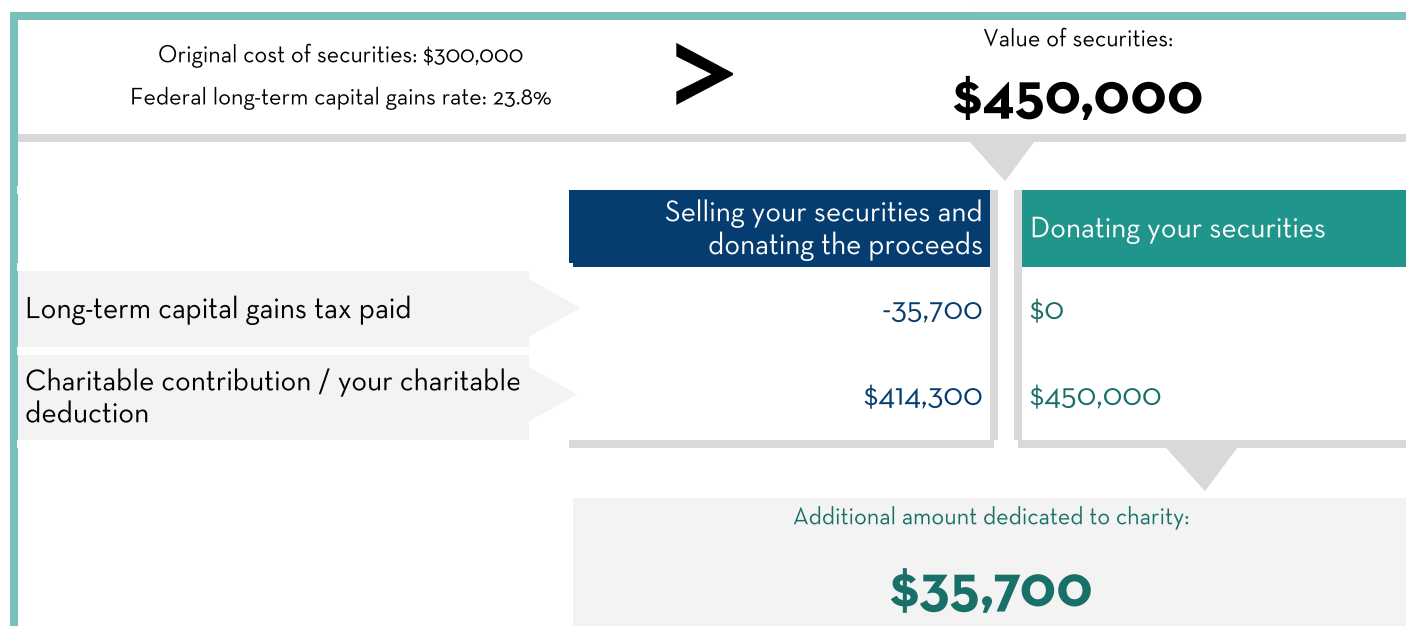
(Donating Assets continued on page 11)

Please note: I am not a tax expert nor financial advisor, so if you have any questions or would like to seek additional information, I would recommend speaking to your trusted advisors.

I found this example at Fidelity Charitable, a division of Fidelity Investments:

Prayer Group

Members and regular attenders are invited to join the private Zion Lutheran Church Prayers group on Facebook (facebook.com/groups/zionbuffaloprayer) to share or respond to prayer requests.



The example above showed two ways an asset of \$450,000 could be given to charity. By first selling the asset, the owner was subject to long-term capital gains tax and could potentially reduce the gift by \$35,700, about 8% less than if the asset was gifted directly. According to their website, there are some specific limits; up to 20% to 30% of your adjusted gross income can be gifted this way depending on if it is gifted directly or gifted through a donor-advised fund such as Fidelity Charitable, Schwab Charitable, etc..

For anyone that has to take minimum required distributions from their retirement accounts (age 72+), I would highly suggest they look into this more as an opportunity to increase the impact of their charitable giving and potentially reduce their tax liabilities.

If you would like to transfer stock or other assets to Zion as part of your charitable giving in 2023, please contact Steve Peterson in the office at 763-682-1245 extension 111 or by email at steve@zionbuffalo.org.

Links to useful information (but please consult your trusted advisors to see if this is right for you):

fidelitycharitable.org

schwabcharitable.org

thrivent.com

Different Funds

General Fund

Operating expenses / day-to-day expenses like staff salaries, synod support, and committee expenses.

Building Fund

Building mortgage expenses.

Special Envelopes

Extra envelopes such as global mission and world hunger gifts, Sunday school & cemetery.

Zion Foundation

Gifts in honor or in memory of loved ones support a broad range of ministries connected to Zion. Gifts to this fund are invested, only the growth can be used to fund grants.

Memorial Fund

Gifts in honor or in memory of loved ones to fund specific items or projects at Zion.

Children, Youth & Family Ministry

(Tamara continued from page 7)

Communion Classes

Whether your child has received communion before, or they are preparing for their first time, this family-centered workshop will help students explore the history, ritual, tradition and meaning of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. This class is designed for children grade 3 and older.

Please note: A minimum of one parent is also required to attend with your child or children for the duration of the class (though we encourage both parents attend when possible).

Pick one class date and then plan to be present for Communion Sunday on Sunday, February 5.

- Thursday, February 2 from 5-8pm
- Saturday, February 4 from 9-12pm

We look forward to our time together, growing in our faith.

Sign up at ZionBuffalo.org.

Middle School Fun Nights

Middle School Fun Night is a program that includes monthly gatherings designed specifically for 6-8 grade students. All activities are geared specifically for their developmental stage in life. The goal is to create community, give them a place where they feel safe, seen, and celebrated, a refuge in which they shed the pressures of the outside world, and come as they are to enjoy food, faith, fun, and fellowship. All middle-school-aged students are welcome and no sign-up is necessary. Students can come as often as they choose and are welcome to bring friends.

The February Fun Night is on Friday, February 17, from 6-9pm. Please contact Holly or Tammy at dym@zionbuffalo.org with any questions.



Buffalo Dance Team; she volunteers and is in her final year of confirmation at Zion. Lexi is in 6th grade and is active with Buffalo hockey, Wright County soccer, volunteering, Zion choir, and confirmation. I'm currently in my final semester of college. I have been studying the Health Information Technician field and I hope to take on a medical coding job this summer.

When I'm not at Zion, you can find me studying for college, driving my daughters around Buffalo and anywhere else their sport competitions or social events lead us.

I am one of twelve children, with three brothers, and eight sisters. I feel having a large family is one of the greatest gifts my parents gave us.

My fondest memory at church is when I was a child. Every Sunday morning and Wednesday evenings, we would all go to church together as a family. My parents and all twelve of us children. We filled up a whole pew at church as did many of the families there. I'll never forget the feeling of feeling safe, secure, and happy sitting with my parents and siblings during the church service.

What I appreciate most about Zion is the experience. It's a feeling of belonging, a sense that you have come to the right place. It is evident from the moment you walk up. From the greeter standing outside all bundled on frigid January morning, shouting "good morning" from a sidewalk away, to the smiling host that offers you a program, the ushers that help you find an open seat, the sounds of the choir that fill the air, renewed hope after hearing the service and the cheerful Sunday school staff. All these experiences are what makes Zion feel so welcome and that I have come to appreciate.

Over the past years, I have volunteered my time at Zion with VBS, Wednesday night suppers, Harvest of Hands, Blessing Closet, and now the Church Council. Helping with these ministries has been a great way to get to know the Zion community.

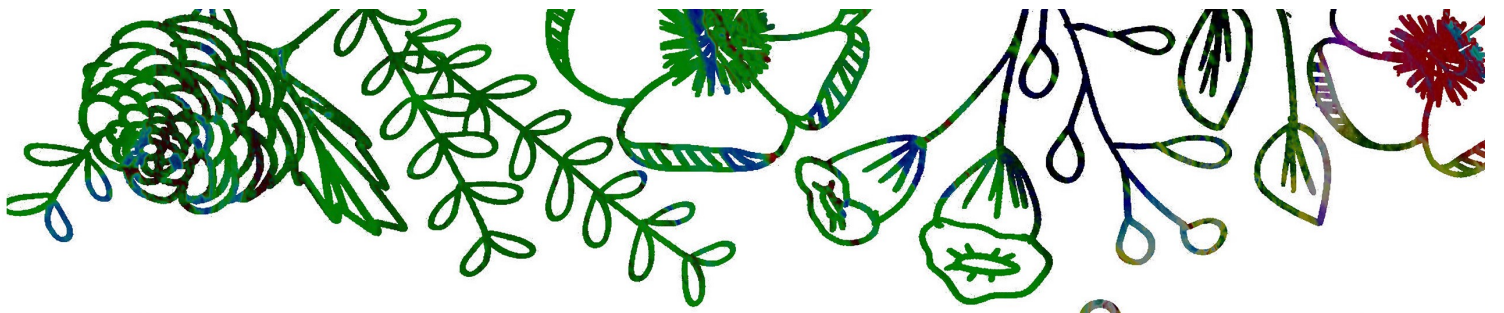
One of the main reasons I was drawn to Zion was for the sake of my children. I wanted my children to experience a church community similar to what I experienced when I was a child. I am thankful that we found Zion and it has a been a good fit for us.

My favorite Hymn is "Jesus Loves Me". It's simple hymn by any standards but its message is profound. It's a good reminder for any age, that no matter where you have been or where you are headed, that Jesus will always love you without conditions. It's a good reminder that Jesus died for our sins and that they may be forgiven.

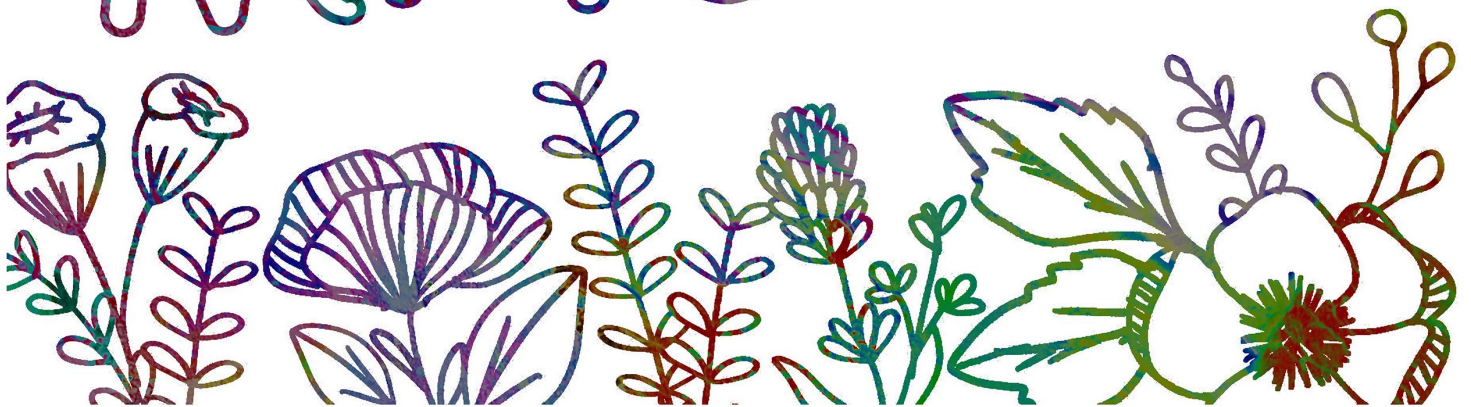
(Offering Envelopes continued from page 2)

- If you write out a check and do not use an envelope please note in the memo line if you are giving funds to a specific fund other than the General Fund (all funds received that are not designated are credited to our General Fund).
- If you give a cash gift please include your name with your gift in addition to what fund you are supporting.

Additional giving options, including credit or debit card giving and ACH giving from your bank account, are always available via ZionBuffalo.org/give.



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Beyond
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Connect Newsletter

Upcoming Deadlines

February 9 at 8am for March Issue

March 9 at 8am for April Issue

Editor: Angela Bengtson

Angela@ZionBuffalo.org

This Month's Cover

Morgan, reminding you of your worth.

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Michael Walsh: Director of Music

Bob Strommen: AV Coordinator

Jenny Pecarina Kids' Place Director

Congregational Council

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Cheryl Bohnen

Joan Halderson

Amy Intrieri

Andy Kohls

Josie LaFave

Mary Mahlberg

Ashley Mattson

Deb Rude

Dale Schmidt

Tamara Wuollet

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Ash Wednesday

February 22

Worship at Noon & 6pm

*Each service includes
Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion.*

