

The Dove

Newsletter of Zion Lutheran Church—Anchorage, AK (LCMS)



JULY
2021

Rev. Kyle Mietzner, Pastor

Do Stuff Here

One of the neat things about being in a church is that you can do more stuff with other people than you can on your own. This is why we are part of a synod. A few thousand congregations working together can do things like send missionaries and operate seminaries to train pastors. The same thing goes for our congregation. You could try to do this on your own, but it would be better with other Christians. Jesus calls you to be part of His body, the church, and He has called you to be part of this church, Zion. It might sound crazy, but you are baptized to be a part of this very congregation. The church is not an abstract concept, but a physical place with real people.

I've often struggled to convince people to take ownership of their church. If you're new here, you might not feel like you've got much of a voice. You've probably been here longer than you think you have. Do you feel much of a sense of ownership here? I've struggled to find a way to talk about this sort of thing. The church has usually talked about *stewardship* rather than ownership. What's the difference?

A steward cares for something that belongs to someone else. An owner is completely responsible for the thing. You do not own this church. This church is Jesus Christ's. (*He's the boss, I only work here.*) You've been called to take care of this place that Christ has established to give His gifts of Word and Sacrament. This place is a fortress of Light in a world of darkness.

Financial crises in the church are no new thing. In fact, I've never been employed by a church that had a positive cash flow. Zion is in a pretty severe financial situation right now. I'm not the money guy here, and will leave it to others to tell you exactly what the numbers are, but it's not good. This is important, because you need to steward the church that you've been called to care for. Your church needs you to do stuff, or it will not exist. The gates of hell will not prevail against *the church*, but congregations do close all the time.

There's some basic things we need you to do: 1 - Come to church. This is your primary duty as part of Zion. 2 - Tithe. Support your church with your money. 3 - Do stuff. Yes, sign up to do stuff! The lawn is not going to mow itself, and the offerings aren't going to count themselves. Vacation Bible School is also not going to teach itself. We need you to commit to doing stuff here.

I'm not here to nag you. God loves a *cheerful* giver. If you don't want to do stuff, then we won't. It isn't a good way to run things. I'm also sure that you know these things already, and I'm not giving you anything new here. You should be aware though, that no one else is going to do the things that we need you to do. The world needs this church, and this church needs you, now more than ever before. No, I will not nag you, but I will help you to find the joy that Jesus has given us in the stewardship of this place, and of one another.

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him Who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light! 1 Peter 2:9

+Pastor Kyle Mietzner

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CHURCH NOTES



Christian Education Opportunities

Children's Sunday School—Sundays @ 11am
 Adult Bible Study—Sundays @ 11am
 Wednesdays @ 7pm

Helping Hands Meal Prep

Our outreach program to help feed residents at Brother Francis Shelter and Clare House has resumed at a reduced level. Due to social distancing guidelines, Helping Hands are recruited as needed.

Offerings

You are welcome to mail your offerings to the church to be presented during the next Sunday worship service. This can also be done through your financial institution's BillPay service.

Church Contacts

Church Office: 338-3838
 Pastor's cell phone: (336)944-2394
 Church address: 2100 Boniface Pkwy
 Anchorage, AK 99504

Birthdays

Chris Dickerson	7/7
Guinevere Hopkins	7/8
Isaac Rawlins	7/8
Marilyn Freitag	7/9
Rev. Kyle Mietzner	7/12
Terry Randel	7/16
Ann Marie Gulberg	7/23
Robert Wilkens	7/27
Jason Hess	7/29
Rayna Mascelli	7/31
Louie Monzon	7/31
Nicole Wisroth	7/31

Anniversaries

Joe & Jahna Pollock 7/2
 Matt & Mary Mills 7/9
 Daniel & Christie Mascelli 7/25



Alaska Scottish Highland Games 2021



Zion's Scottish Fare food booth had another successful year at the Highland Games. Making the decision to participate with just over 2 weeks before the event, we were still able to make a couple hundred pasties, a few gallons of cock-a-leekie soup, and 65 dozen Scotch eggs. And we sold out of everything by 3:40pm on Saturday. We had a long line similar to the picture most of the day, but it was fun.

Deaconess Ellee Mietzner

Smile With the Goldfish in the House of God

You probably know all about goldfish crackers, whether you've doled them out to your children or any children, or found how delicious they are and bought a sneaky bag of them for yourself. These crackers seem to be ubiquitous with children, and besides being delicious, they are cute. Each one has a little smile on it.

When I cleaned the church a couple weeks ago, I came across a few of these goldfish, smiling up at me as I swept them up. Instead of being exasperated with the mess (as I admit I often am at home), I smiled. Sure, the smiles on those little crackers are pretty infectious, but I smiled because I thought of all the children in our church. I thought of their little voices singing, crying, saying the Lord's Prayer, whining, sometimes practically shouting "Amen!" at the end of prayers. I thought of how many of them I had seen washed in the waters of Holy baptism, and even my own children who have (mostly) moved on from goldfish crackers in the pews to reception of the Eucharist. I thought of the wonder and blessing of them growing up in the church, making themselves at home during the service enough to not worry about a couple of dropped goldfish crackers.

This blessing that made me smile is the body of Christ. It is each one of us as we gather to receive God's gifts, and as we move about in the world. These blessings of the body of Christ can surely be seen everywhere, and the greatest place is in our Lord's Holy house, our church.

The church where we gather, Zion Lutheran Church at 2100 Boniface Parkway, is the center of our lives. It is the place we are drawn back to time and time again, over lifetimes. Visitors on vacation are drawn to this building because this is where our Lord has promised to be. Here we can find rest, hugs, laughter, consolation, tears, music, food, all the precious gifts of God. Here we are delighted by the Word in the form of speaking, splashing, eating and drinking. Here is where we move through time singing Silent Night, dressing the sanctuary in black, filling it with Alleluias on Easter morning, celebrating weddings, mourning our dead, standing in prayer, confessing our sins, having our bodies and souls restored year in and year out. Here is why we can go on. This house, this place, built by human hands and illuminated by God's own steadfast love, is why we live.

So what do we make of this? What does this mean? I'll go ahead and insist that this place is worth our time, because our Lord, the Creator of the universe, has made it abundantly clear that we are all worth His time. He has given the hands to build our church board by board. He has gathered us here. He has sustained us and fed us and brought us around Him and around each other. Your commitment to our church and all of her endeavors matter to the whole body of Christ. Our hands are made for each other.

So when you are cleaning the church, creating that special dish for the potluck, teaching Sunday school, going to Bible study, serving on a board, fixing a leaky drinking fountain, or giving your time and money to any number of joyful tasks around God's house and the body of Christ therein, remember that it is worth it. We have nothing to lose and everything to gain by taking care of this building and each other. Let us hold fast to Christ, our own church, and to one another. It's all that matters. Sweep up the crackers and smile.



STEWARDSHIP

“For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery” (Galatians 5:1).

We celebrate this month because of the freedoms and liberties our country has afforded us. We are right to do this. We should be thankful for these liberties – the freedom to gather together to worship and to live out what we believe in our daily lives.

But freedom and liberty in our age have devolved. It has become a freedom from duty instead of a freedom for it. Indeed, freedom and liberty in our age has turned into licentiousness – a license to do what we want, when we want. This license is a submission again to a yoke of slavery. For freedom as license to do what we desire when we desire it means we are slaves to our desires and slaves to our passions.

Christ died to set us free from our desires. In Holy Baptism, our Old Adam is drowned and put to death along with all sin and evil desires so that a new man may arise and live before God in righteousness and purity. In Christ, we are a new creation. We are set free from the passions of the flesh so that we are free to do our duty and bear fruits of the Spirit.

Our duty is what God calls us to do as members of a family, society, and the Church. God calls us to believe in His Word and gladly hear and learn it. He calls us to pray for all people. He calls us to live in faith toward Him and in fervent love for our neighbor. He calls us to put the gifts He gives to us in His service. God calls parents to provide for their children and raise them in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

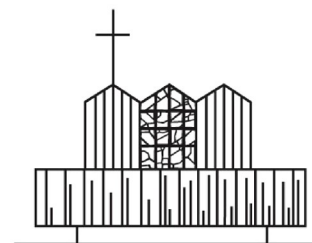
And God calls children to honor their parents and provide and care for them when they are no longer able to do so themselves. God calls the government to punish those who do evil and to reward those who do good. He calls citizens to pay their taxes and honor the governing officials as God’s servants. He calls pastors to preach and teach the Gospel, repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And He calls hearers to support those who teach them with every good thing.

Christ died to set us free from the works of our selfish flesh, giving us the freedom and liberty to do our duty. Stand firm, then, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

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JULY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27 9:30am Divine Service 11am Bible Study & Sunday School	28	29	30 7pm Bible Study	1-Jul	2	3
4th of July 4 9:30am Divine Service 11am Bible Study & Sunday School	5	6	7 7pm Bible Study	8 Pastor on vacation	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Pastor on vacation						
9:30am Divine Service		7pm Council Meeting				
11am Bible Study & Sunday School						
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Pastor on vacation						
9:30am Divine Service						
11am Bible Study & Sunday School						
25	26	27	28 7pm Bible Study	29	30	31
9:30am Divine Service 11am Bible Study & Sunday School 12pm Church Picnic at Zion						