

The Dove

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



MAY
2020

Rev. Kyle Mietzner, Pastor

Coming Back

“When do you think we can come back to church?” I’ve been asked this question in many and various forms over the past few weeks. It reflects a longing that we all have during the days of social distancing. While we’re happy to help slow the spread of an unknown and invisible threat, we all still realize that we are not meant to be distant from one another for all that long. Additionally, we’ve been divorced from the corporate and physical nature of our faith. You cannot be a Christian on your own. You are baptized into the church. You are confirmed in a church. The Lord’s Supper is given and received within a congregation. We receive the Lord’s gifts together. Virtual church is no substitute for the real thing. It has been a temporary measure. I’ve not met a single person who has said, “You know what pastor, I think I’m just going to stick with the internet church.” Perhaps we didn’t know what a great gift we had in our congregation, until it was taken from us. You are not alone if you’ve wondered when we can come back to church.

Starting this Sunday, March 10, we will have gatherings of 20 people at a time for the Divine Service. We will follow health guidelines as best as possible. I’ll ask for you to announce your intention to attend before hand, so that we do not have to turn anyone away. Families will be seated at a distance in the sanctuary. Hand washing and sanitization will be required. I have little doubt that you can come to Zion and will not be put at any greater risk than any of the other parts of our community. The elders and I are still working out the exact details of how this will look. (We will continue to stream service for those who cannot yet come back.)

I also anticipate that this will be strange. It is not ideal and it is not perfect. But what is? Let’s do the best we can. Your desire to receive the Lord’s gifts is good. We’ve missed out on Holy Week and Easter together. This is a big thing. Yet, the Lord’s resurrection is not confined to a single day, week, or even a season. We now live in the light of Christ. You carry His death and resurrection by virtue of your baptism. Christ is risen, whether or not we were able to gather to celebrate! And because He is still risen, we will continue to come together. Our scattering will not last forever. Our goal is the ultimate restoration of our congregation, returning from exile as one, into the Lord’s Zion.

Maybe we look forward to this so much because it is a small picture of the ultimate restoration of all things, when all that is broken will be restored, the scattered will be gathered, and the dead will be raised. We will soon call you out of your homes and back to the Lord’s house. Christ will soon call you out of your grave, out of death and into life. I can’t wait to see you come back! Alleluia, Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, alleluia!

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+Pastor Kyle Mietzner

CHURCH NOTES

Christian Education Opportunities

Most Christian education activities are on hold. We have begun a Tuesday 7pm bible study via Zoom. If you, or someone you know, weren't included on the email invitation, please contact the Zion office and/or Pastor to be added to the distribution list.

Helping Hands Meal Prep

Our outreach program to help feed residents at Brother Francis Shelter and Clare House is temporarily suspended. Due to COVID-19, Clare House is not accepting food prepared by outside sources. Also, the Brother Francis occupants are being housed at the Boeke and Sullivan arenas at this time.

Pioneer Home Christian Fellowship

Suspended temporarily.

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.

Birthdays

Sam Erickson	5/3
Matthew Mills	5/7
Keagan Wisroth	5/7
Christina Lanz	5/9
Jillian Erickson	5/10
Agnes Mietzner	5/12
Zachary Davila	5/14
Tristan Wisroth	5/27
Stephanie Anderson	5/31



Anniversaries

Gene & Richard Murphy	5/16
Susan & Al Lively	5/22
Brooke & Craig Hartman	5/29



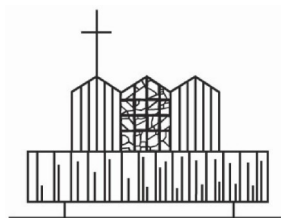
Church Contacts

Church Office:	338-3838
Preschool Office:	222-3838
Pastor's cell phone:	(336)944-2394
Church address:	2100 Boniface Pkwy Anchorage, AK 99504

Worship Services

Services for the time being are being led online via Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/zionalaska/live/>. At the time of the service, look for the video with the **LIVE** button. You do not need a Facebook account to view the services. Simply click 'Not now' if prompted to 'login or create an account'. In some instances, you may need to enter a 'type what you see' code (these are usually case-sensitive) but you should be directed after that. There is an order of service PDF for each service posted on our [ZionAnchorage.org](https://www.zionanchorage.org). These can be printed to follow along, or use a hymnal if you have one. Here is the current schedule. Note that all past service videos are in the videos section if you miss one. There are also links from the website to the Facebook page now.

UPDATE: Plans are in the works to have in-person worship services for up to 20 people. More info to come in the following days!



Zion Lutheran Church & Preschool

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Dear members of Zion,

Hopefully this letter finds you and your loved ones well and that you are safely weathering this pandemic. As you should be aware, Zion continues to live-stream services every week on Facebook Live. Those who do not have a Facebook account can still access the services through the link provided on Zion's website at zionanchorage.org. What a blessing that we can still worship together in this way even though we are physically separated!

We thank God for your continued support of the church. Your presence in virtual services and Bible studies, your support of the ministry, the love and care you show to your neighbor in need – God works through you to accomplish His work. We also thank those that have continued serving the congregation during this time, especially Pastor Mietzner, as well as Pastor Glowinski, Jesse, and Sue.

We would like to let you know that Zion is struggling to pay its bills; this situation has been developing throughout 2020, but has become more dire in the past two months. Zion is in the process of receiving Payment Protection Plan (PPP) funds that will cover most of the payroll costs for two months. These funds will help mitigate the immediate difficulties, but will not solve the long-term situation. In this, as with all things, we place our trust in God. He has and does provide for His Church through faithful stewardship of the gifts He has given to us. Rather than facing this financial challenge with fearfulness or a resentful heart, let us keep in mind what the Apostle Paul says: "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7). We rest secure in the knowledge that no matter what happens in this world, God will continue to preserve His Church.

Please let us know if your life situation has changed, or if you need help of any kind. Our Elders will be reaching out to their groups, but do not hesitate to contact Zion for assistance. In other news, the bi-annual congregational voters' meeting has been delayed until we can meet in person. The council is working on contingencies if the meeting is delayed past June.

We look forward to the time when we can again worship and commune together in our church building. Pastor and the Elders are closely monitoring the situation in Anchorage and we will hold in-person services as soon as it is feasible. We thank you for your patience as we endure this time apart. We place our hope in God, for He takes the brokenness of this world and works through it to accomplish His will.

God's blessings to each of you,

Thomas D Rawlins
Executive Director, Zion Lutheran Church



Zion Lutheran Preschool

Greetings! As you know, the Governor has closed the schools, and the Mayor has us on hunker down, due to the COVID-19 virus. It has been a difficult time being away from the children and their families the past few weeks, as we all need to be safe from this silent virus. I would like to share with you what Zion Lutheran Preschool has been doing during this pandemic.

All of our children, parents and staff have been blessed during these trying times. I have been in communication with each of our parents by phone, email and texts. Weekly lesson plans are prepared from our One In Christ curriculum and emailed to each of our families. This has had great response; they are enjoyed by the parents, and the children love doing the different activities! Tuition reimbursement has not been asked for. Brandie has been helping research, taking online training classes, and staying in touch with me regularly.

These are a few examples of the many tasks I have been keeping up with during this time: attending various webinars from HeadStart and Alaskan child care providers from across the state. Also, the Northwest District, LCMS, E-12 Executive Director of Education Services, Jim Scriven, has held webinars for the directors and teachers in the district. Each of these meetings has been informational on the challenges we are facing during this pandemic. On another note, the State of Alaska has responded with funding for all licensed child care providers. The good news is that the preschool falls into this category since we are licensed and serve children ages 2-5 years old! More on that to come!

Romans 5:3-5 says “because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.” I pray each of you have been well! Stay safe.

God bless you and your family,
Ms. Gloria Vuocolo



STEWARDSHIP

Our Savior calls us to follow Him in generosity. “For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.” (John 13:15) We cannot give our lives for the salvation of the world, of course. Praise God – that job’s already done!

But with hearts full of thanksgiving for what Jesus has given us, we can follow Jesus’ example of generous giving. And this is not merely an example alone. It’s also our Lord’s command. “The one who contributes, (let him give) in generosity.” (Rom. 12:8)

So, when we give to help others who are in need, and when we bring offerings to the Lord, we should strive to heed His command and follow the pattern He has established for us. Jesus did not give us leftovers. He gave His best. So, we should not give leftovers, either, but the first and best of what He has given us. Jesus did not give as an afterthought, but according to the plan of salvation God established from the foundation of the world.

So, when it comes to our offerings to the Lord, we should make a thoughtful plan to give generously, in proportion to the way He has blessed us. Like the Macedonian Christians, who gave according to their ability – and even beyond their ability (2 Cor. 8:3) – we can and should give a generous portion of the income that God provides us to honor the Lord.

So also, we should give freely, just as Jesus gave freely for us. There is no compulsion involved in our works of love and our offerings to the Lord. Nor do we give grudgingly. We should give freely and cheerfully because we want to out of thanksgiving. “Each as he purposes in his heart,” as the Lord says. (2 Cor. 9:7) There is no New Testament ceremonial law involved here. Rather, we are free to give as generously as our Savior has given for us.

In the same way, our Lord teaches us to give generously out of love – love for Him and for our neighbor. Genuine love is always love in deed (1 John 3:18), love such as Jesus showed us all. It is love that sees our neighbor in need and gives generously to help him. It is love that hears the Word of the Lord and does what it says. If we truly love, we give generously. If we give without love, our giving is not truly following Jesus.

Finally, we follow Jesus in generosity when we give for a good purpose to thank the Lord and support His gospel ministry and other works of mercy. The people of Israel gave generously for the service of God’s gospel purposes, to construct and support the operation of the tabernacle. For that was the place where the Lord received the Old Testament sacrifices, through which He bestowed the forgiveness of sins on His people. So, they gave abundantly – so abundantly that they had to be told to stop giving. (Ex. 36:5-6)

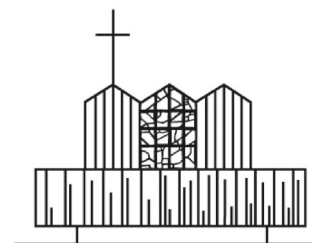
In the same way, we should bring generous offerings to support the Lord’s work of bestowing His gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation in our congregations through the preaching and teaching of His Word, Baptism, and the Lord’s Supper. We should support the Lord’s work of caring for those who are poor and needy.

Our Savior calls us to follow His example in generous giving. Let us then, with thankful hearts, rededicate ourselves to following Him in generosity.

lcms.org



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MAY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26 9:30am Matins Service-FB live 10:45am Bible Study via Zoom	27	28	29 7pm Zoom Bible Study	30	1-May	2
3 9:30am Matins Service-FB live 10:45am Bible Study via Zoom	4	5	6 7pm Zoom Bible Study	7	8	9
10 Mother's Day 9:30am Worship Bible Study via Zoom	11	12 7pm Council Meeting via Zoom	13 7pm Zoom Bible Study	14	15	16
17 9:30am Worship Bible Study via Zoom	18	19	20 7pm Zoom Bible Study	21 7pm The Ascension of Our Lord Service	22	23
24 9:30am Worship Bible Study via Zoom	25 Memorial Day	26	27 7pm Zoom Bible Study	28	29	30
31 The Day of Pentecost 9:30am Worship Bible Study via Zoom	1-Jun	2	3	4	5	6

Services for the time being are being led online via Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/zionalaska/live/> .