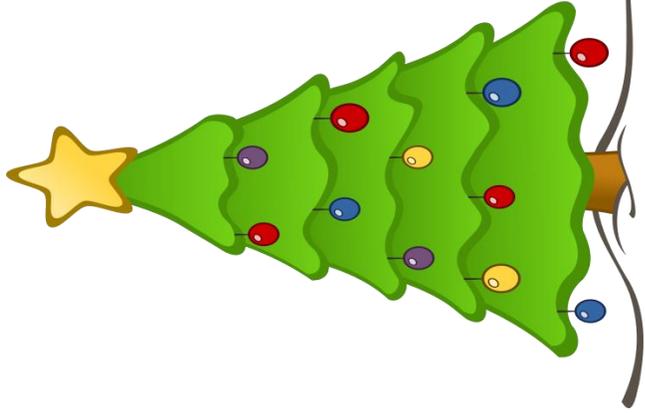


ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
402 Main Street
P.O. Box 339
Lowden, IA 52255-0339
Rev. Stephen Stepp, Pastor

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ZION HERALD December 2015 Volume 88 No. 11



Christmas Dinner 2015

Senior High Fellowship would like to invite everyone to come and enjoy the annual Christmas Dinner in our fellowship hall on Sunday, December 6th following the worship service. Be ready to enjoy great food, wonderful people, intriguing conversion, fun games, and prizes.

“And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” Luke 2:8-14

Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross *Offering will be taken on December 20th.*

For 113 years, the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund has been a leading light in our mission. The Christmas Fund is one of the 4 Special Mission Offerings of the United Church of Christ and provides us with means to directly assist those who have so faithfully and selflessly served and now find themselves facing unexpected financial needs.

Greetings Sisters and Brothers,

December! Advent! Christmas! Snow! ... Snow?

If you are thinking that I love snow, I do...to a point. I love the beauty of a new fallen snow as its gives a luster of midday on a brightly moon lit night. I love the silence of a fresh snowfall as it offers a peaceful escape from the background noises of the world. But what I love most about the first snowfall is that it signals us, "Christmas is coming!"

When I was a younger lad, I must admit that Christmas was by far my favorite day of the year. But was it because I was in two Christmas programs each year? Or maybe because I love to sing *Joy to the World*? Or maybe it was the presents I expected to get each year? Well those were certainly part of Christmas for me, but what I remember most is that special feeling in my heart after the first snowfall. The feeling that made me want to shout out Luke chapter 2 to anyone that would listen because it was my favorite story in the Bible.

Now I must be honest, that feeling following the first snowfall faded as I grew up, at least until I had children of my own. It was that event in my life, the birth of my first child that rekindled that joy and excitement. You see it is easy for us to get caught up in the things of this world that are only temporary. Toys, houses, cars, promotions, etc. are the things of this world that are shallow and meaningless when we compare them to the gift of life; and that is what we are reminded of on December 25th. That is what we are given by God on the day Jesus was born, a new life that begins with a child who would grow up and never look past the true purpose of our humanity, the true meanly of being created in the image of God. That purpose is to simply

accept the loving relationship God offers to each and every human being and accept a loving relationship with each of God's people.

So let's keep it simple this year; let us celebrate the birth of Jesus by loving God and each other like Jesus Christ loved. Jesus gave what he had so that others would not suffer in this life or in the life to come. May we all have a wondrous Christmas as we remember the great gift of new life in the birth of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Steve

*The Son of God became a man
to enable men to become the
sons of God. C.S.Lewis*



This is a special thank you to Emogene Ford who very generously gave the funds needed to purchase the new colored printer. It's greatly appreciated and a wonderful addition to the office equipment.

IMPORTANT TIDBITS

December 6 Worship Service will be at 10:30

There will be no communion on that day.

**December 13 – New Members will be joining with
Communion served.**

Congregational Meeting will follow worship.

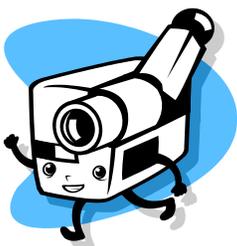
MEDICAL LEAVE

Secretary Linda Behrens will be on a medical leave from 12/01/15 through 12/15/15. In her absence, Mary Campbell will temporarily assist in the Church Office during regular office hours. We wish her well.

THIS MONTH USHERS

Dec. 6, 2015	Senior High Fellowship
Dec. 13, 2015	Bob & Joni Fields
Dec. 20, 2015	Kent & Janice Strackbein
Dec. 24, 2015	Dan & Amy Mohr
Dec. 27, 2015	Church Council
<hr/>	
January 3, 2016	Church Council
January 10, 2016	Lonnie & Stacie Luepker
January 17, 2016	Kirk & Laurie Steinke
January 24, 2016	Keith Stewart & Jamie Nabb
January 31, 2016	Senior High Fellowship

VIDEOGRAPHERS



December

Dec. 6	Donna Luepker
Dec. 13	Cheryl Boedeker
Dec. 20	Cody Fields
Dec. 24	Jean Stepp
Dec. 27	David Niermeyer

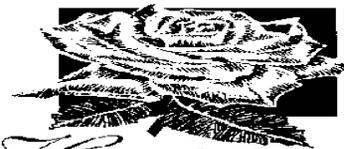


DECEMBER

December 6	Kacy Gottschalk & Mackenzie Poppe
December 13	Kelly Proesch & Addie Luepker
December 20	Mackenzie Poppe & Mariah Behrens
December 24	Addie Luepker & Mariah Behrens
December 27	Kacy Gottschalk & Kelly Proesch



December 1	Berneice Minor
December 2	Larry Havel
December 3	Dana Moran
	Sarah Ann Gottschalk
December 5	Jaynice Hamdorf, Jane Drewelow, Linda Horman, Scott Fields
December 7	Scott Boedeker, Gary Klahn, Riley Holst
December 8	Dwight Niermeyer
December 9	Megan Neil
December 11	Landon Luepker
December 12	Kent Strackbein, *Barry Hoffmeier
December 15	Jill Jacobs, Elle Esbaum
December 17	Wilbert Muhs
December 20	Bonnie Kintzel, Angie Peet, Tim Kahl
December 21	Beth Fox, Pavin Esbaum
December 26	Sadie Holst
December 27	Trevor Hamdorf
December 28	Alex Dittmer, *Jessie Horman
December 30	Cindy Wiedenhoff



Happy Anniversary!

December 9	Donavon & Linda Freese 48 years
December 28	Tessa & *David Holst 25 years
December 31	Ben & Stacy Traver 18 years



**ZION EVENING CIRCLE
NOVEMBER 16, 2015**

Zion Evening Circle members met November 16, 2015, on a wet, rainy night, to trim and count 3273 Box tops for Education; 1662 Campbell's Labels for Education; and 709 Our Family bar codes to donate to the North Cedar Schools. Devotions entitled a "Thanksgiving Devotion" were led by Terry. She had some most interesting facts to tell us. Refreshments were served by Janie and Linda. Donna opened the business meeting with 13 members answering roll call. The secretary's minutes were read and approved. The treasurer's report was read and approved. A motion to pay bills was made by Terry and 2nd by Julie. Carried.

Donna thanked Julie and Rose for decorating the Cornucopia on the altar and for taking care of the Totenfest flowers and altar flowers and bulletin board for November. It was reported that poinsettia sales were going well.

Joy announced that our Christmas party will be December 21st in Fellowship Hall. A social hour beginning at 5:30 (if you want to bring a bottle of your favorite wine, please do) and supper catered by Mill Creek will be at 6:00. The cost is \$12 per person. Members should bring a gift for the church (cleaning supplies, paper products, etc.) Please let Joy know by Nov. 29th if you will be able to come.

Discussion was held on the North Cedar bell tree and Christmas gifts. Terry offered to purchase two gifts to be donated from Evening Circle. Circle will also furnish apples and oranges for the Christmas food baskets. Joy will purchase them.

Julie announced that Christmas decorating for church will be on Nov. 28th beginning at 9:00 a.m.. All help will be appreciated.

Carma and Julie will fix the noon meal for the Committee on Ministry on Nov. 17th. December flowers will be done by Marlene W., Terry and Joy. At the January meeting Janie and Joy will be planning our fun night entertainment. Donna will do devotions and refreshments will be served by Marlene F. and Julie. Linda and Marilyn will serve the January meeting of the Committee on Ministry.

There being no further business, meeting was adjourned.

Sharon Elijah

Secretary

=====

**Zion United Church of Christ
giving range report.**

<u>Congregational Giving Range</u>	
Range	# in Range
\$1-50	27
\$50-100	9
\$100-200	13
\$200-300	4
\$300-500	15
\$500-1000	21
\$1000-2000	15
\$2000-3000	6
\$3000-4000	6
\$4000-5000	1

This is a giving range report that reflects the amount given so far this year by individual members, families and friends. This report helps us to understand giving diversity within our congregation and it helps each of us set goals as we finish this year of giving. May God guide us to compassion and generosity as we continue the work of Jesus Christ in our community.



**CHURCH
COUNCIL**
ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
November 10, 2015

Zion United Church of Christ Council meeting was held on November 20, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. Meeting was called to order by President David Niermeyer. Pastor Steve opened with a reading and a prayer. Those in attendance were Pastor Steve, Merlin Conrad, Tanya Stewart, Pete Johnson, Kevin Kahl, David Niermeyer, Renate Port; Linda Behrens was present through treasurer report.

Joys and concerns were shared. Pastor asked that we keep Don Boedeker our prayer.

Minutes of October meeting were read and reviewed. A motion was made by Pete and 2nd by Merlin. Motion carried.

Reports:

General Fund was reported by Linda. Pete made a motion to approve with a second by Kevin. Motion carried. The rest of the financial reports were read and Kevin made a motion to approve them with a second by Tanya. Motion passed.

Calendar

November 16 at 7:00 p.m. Evening Circle meeting
November 17 at 10:00 a.m. Eastern Iowa Committee on Ministry met. The Ministry Advisory Board also met.
November 18 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Confirmation Classes
November 19 10:00a.m. Wheatland Nursing Home Service
November 21 4:00 p.m. Cub Scouts Silly Supper
November 22 Bake Sale, Confirmation class
November 22 Clarence Nursing Home 2:00
November 24 Assemble Herald

November 28 Decorate Church for Advent Season 9:00 a.m.

Pastor Reports

- ❖ Confirmation Class did a nice job on Totenfest.
- ❖ Sat. November 28 –Decorate the Church 9:00 a.m.
- ❖ Sunday December 6 – Church will be at 10:30 due to Cantata at Clarence.
- ❖ December 13 - New Members joining, Carol Ingle and Rick and Mary Balke, during Church service with reception to follow.
- ❖ December 20 – Cantata will be here at 10:15
- ❖ December 24 – Christmas Eve Service at 6:30, Christian Education program & Candlelight Service

Pastor's report was approved with a motion by Merlin and second by Tanya. Motion Carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Insulation, still waiting to hear.
- Sunday School roof, Jason will start later November/early December

NEW BUSINESS:

- Snow removal - will talk to Marvin Mooney about snow removal.
- Lawn mowing - will discuss new contract next year.
- Will put a copy of giving in Herald.
- Board will meet with Council. Those are Al Mohr, Denny Mostaret, David Niermeyer and Kevin Kahl. Date to be set.

DISCUSSION TOPIC:

What is your hope or vision of what Zion United Church of Christ will be 2020?

Next meeting will be December 15, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.

Pastor closed with a prayer.

Meeting adjourned with Merlin Conrad by making a motion and second by Kevin. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted

Renate Port, Secretary

Missions Committee Meeting

- The Missions Committee met Sunday, November 8, 2015 following church services. Members in attendance were Linda Behrens, Carmen Fields, Tanya Stewart, Mary Huffman and Rev. Steve Stepp.
- The Ice Cream Social raised \$380, which will go to the School Milk Program. Bill Norton made a generous donation and Mary will get a thank you to him. It was moved and seconded to add an additional \$120 to make it an even \$500.
- Everyone felt the social was a success, but it was decided to make carry-outs available next time, since they were requested from some who could not stay.
- Pastor Steve asked committee members to participate in explaining the Neighbors in Need project at the October 18 church service. Beth, Carmen, Marlene and Mary will present various topics.
- The Crop walk was discussed and it was suggested that we try doing it during Sunday School next year.
- The next meeting will be November 8.
- Pastor Steve closed with a prayer.

Congregational Meeting

There will be a Congregational Meeting on
December 13, 2015

following the 10:15 am worship service.

The election of church council members and conference delegates will take place. The 2016 Budget will also be discussed and voted on during this meeting.

Greetings from Christian Education!

On November 22nd our youth did a skit called, "A Trip to the Library". All of our youth who were able to participate did an outstanding job! It's not the easiest thing to do to get up in front of an audience and speak BUT all of our youth did and did it well! We have been focused on the Books of the BIBLE for two months and we now come to a close for our Christmas season to begin! I want to thank our teachers for their time in the classrooms! We are truly blessed for your time and dedication!

Advent Season begins and Christmas draws near! We will focus on the Christmas story of our Savior's birth in the classrooms! The tradition of Christmas Eve service continues on with our youth leading the program! Please gather your families, friends, and neighbors for our December 24th service at 6:30p.m. All are welcome to join us! With the youth leading the program; it is essential for their attendance in Sunday School at 9AM for them to be prepared for the event! We will plan for some additional practices and dress rehearsals as we get closer to Christmas!

THANK YOU to all those who donated BUTTONS, PUZZLES, and JARS! I believe we have a great supply to work with for future crafts! Such a blessing to ask for help and receive such a great response! Thanks again! We look forward to sharing with you our creations! If you ever have questions about our Christian Education program; please feel free to contact me!

Blessings to all!

Kelly Nabb

Zion United Church of Christ

Christian Education Coordinator

(563) 249-2335

December 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. ZYC Meeting 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Confirmation Class 7:00 p.m. Zion Choir Practice	3	4	5
6 9:00 C.E. Class 10:30 a.m. Worship Service Senior High Christmas Dinner following worship	7	8	9 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Confirmation Class	10	11	12
13 9:00 C.E. Class 10:30 a.m. Worship Service w/ New Members & Communion Congregational Meeting following	14	15 6:00 Church Council Meeting 7:00 Christmas Dinner	16 ZYC 4:00 to 6:00 Christmas Party 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Confirmation Class	17 10:00 a.m. Wheatland Nursing Home Service	18	19
20 9:00 C.E. Class 10:30 a.m. Worship Service Cantata performed during	21 Evening Circle Christmas Party 5:30 Social Hour 6:00 Meal	22	23 NO Confirmation	24 6:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Service	25 Christmas Day MERRY CHRISTMAS!!	26
27 NO C.E. Class 10:30 a.m. Worship Service	28	29	30 NO Confirmation	31 New Year's Eve		

“THE LIBRARY OF GOD’S WORD”

Our Christian Education students taught the congregation about the books of the Bible by sharing what they have learned through a very well preformed skit.
Thank you teachers and youth!

