

**ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**402 Main Street**

**P.O. Box 339**

**Lowden, IA 52255-0339**

**Rev. Stephen Stepp, Pastor**

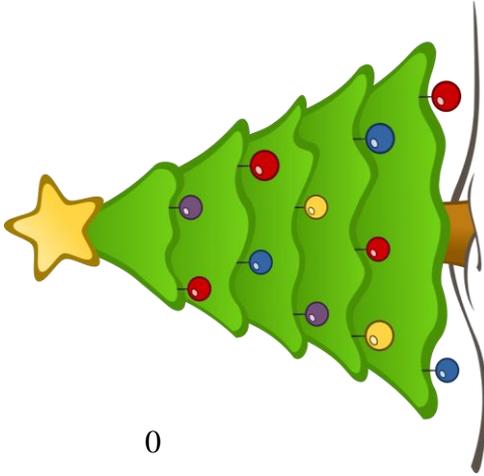
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# Christmas Dinner 2016

Senior High Fellowship would like to invite everyone to come and enjoy the annual Christmas Dinner in our fellowship hall on Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup>.*

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 it 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 25<sup>th</sup>. 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.

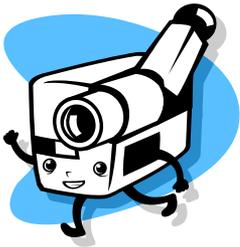
Grace and peace,  
Pastor Steve

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

**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 USHHERS MONTH

Dec. 4, 2016	Senior High Fellowship
Dec. 11, 2016	Rose Horman & Mary Huffman
Dec. 18, 2016	Lonnie & Stacey Luepker
Dec. 24, 2016	Scott & Carmen Fields
Dec. 25, 2016	Church Council
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January 1, 2017	Church Council
January 8, 2017	Randy & Sandra Horman
January 15, 2017	Dan & Amy Mohr
January 22, 2017	Kirk & Laurie Steinke
January 29, 2017	Senior High Fellowship



## VIDEOGRAPHERS

### December

Dec. 4	Jane Drewelow
Dec. 11	Cheryl Boedeker
Dec. 18	Donna Luepker
Dec. 24	Jody Yutesler
Dec. 25	Jean Stepp



## DECEMBER

December 4	Koby Stewart & Jacob Gottschalk
December 11	Leighton Tjaden & Milo Easterly
December 18	Abby Blake & Taylor Lohman
December 24	Church Council
December 25	Nathan Nabb & Koby Stewart



December 1	Berniece Minor
December 2	Larry Havel
December 3	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, Avery O'Howell, Hannah O'Howell
December 26	Sadie Holst
December 27	Trevor Hamdorf
December 28	Alex Dittmer, *Jessie Horman
December 30	Cindy Wiedenhoff



*Happy Anniversary!*

December 9  
December 28

Donavon & Linda Freese 1967  
Tessa & \*David Holst 1990



**ZION EVENING CIRCLE  
NOVEMBER 21, 2016**

3300 Boxtops for Education and 640 Our Family labels were trimmed and counted at our Evening Circle meeting on November 21, 2016. The labels will be taken to the North Cedar Elementary School and the money raised, over \$330.00, will be used at school for class trips, recess equipment and other things needed by the school.

Terry presented an interesting Thanksgiving devotion entitled "The Holiday That is Different".

President Donna called the meeting to order with 14 members and Pastor Steve answering roll call. The Secretary's report was read and approved. The treasurer's report was read and approved. Millie moved, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jody to pay the bills. Approved. A thank you note from Jan Strackbein was read. Donna thanked Linda and Annette for setting up the pretty altar for Thanksgiving and for getting the Totenfest flowers and candles. She thanked Marlene W.,

Janis and Jane for ordering the 25 poinsettias that will be used during Advent and Christmas. Linda and Sharon were thanked for serving the Committee on Ministry meeting held in November.

The project committee reported that our Christmas party will be held on December 19<sup>th</sup> in Fellowship Hall with Mill Creek catering the meal. Social hour will begin at 5:00 with dinner at 6:00. Members should bring a paper product for the church as our gifts to the church. If you wish you may bring a bottle of wine to share. The cost of the meal is \$12.00.

Our January meeting will be a Sunday School Teacher Appreciation night starting at 6:30. Janis and Annette showed us the craft we will be making that night. Serving the Committee on Ministry in January will be Terry and Marlene W. Sharon will take care of flowers and the bulletin board; Jane will do devotions and Linda, Julie and Carolee will be in charge of refreshments.

Pastor reminded us that the Thanksgiving Eve Service will be held Wednesday night. The Confirmation Class will take part in the service. Christmas decorating will be done on Saturday, Nov. 26<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00 a.m. All are welcome to come and help.

Discussion was held about the bells on the Christmas tree. Marlene W. and Terry will buy 2 gifts. Gifts are to be put under the tree by Dec. 11. Jody moved and Annette seconded a motion for Circle to help pay for the fresh fruit to be put in the Christmas baskets.

Refreshments were served by Marlene F. and Marilyn.

Sharon Elijah  
Secretary

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## 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 15, 2016**

Zion United Church of Christ Council meeting was held on November 15, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. Meeting was called to order by President David Niermeyer, then opened with a prayer. Those in attendance were Jamie Nabb, Pete Johnson, Tanya Stewart, David Niermeyer and Merlin Conrad. Linda Behrens was present through treasurer report. Pastor Steve was sick and Bonnie Kintzel joined the meeting in progress during old business.

**Joys and concerns** were shared. News and happened were announced.

Secretary's minutes from Church Council meeting October 18, 2016 were read and approved, on a motion made by Jamie, second 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: Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup> 7:00 p.m. Thanksgiving Eve Service  
Nov. 26<sup>th</sup> 9:00 a.m. Decorate the church for Christmas  
Nov. 27<sup>th</sup> Advent begins.**

**Mission Committee meeting following worship**

**Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> Senior High's Zion Dinner**

**Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> Congregational Meeting following worship**

**Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> 6:00 p.m. Council Meeting & Dinner**

**Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> 6:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Service**

**Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> 9:00 a.m. Worship Service (No Sunday School)**

**OLD BUSINESS**

Kitchen improvement: awaiting Home Town's evaluation  
Christian Ed window replacement update. Seeking sponsors to fund this project. Great opportunity for Memorial Gifts. West and north side to be completed first.  
Pastoral compensation. Motion made by Merlin, second by Pete to give Pastor a 5% salary increase, totaling \$37,275. Motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- Discussed emailing The Herald. Please make sure the office has your current address, phone number, email and contact information on file.

- Discussed church membership and church attendance/participation. Church membership expectations to be presented in the new year.
- Lion's has inquired to use the Fellowship Hall and Kitchen for their monthly meetings. Merlin motioned and Pete second, Lion's may use the Fellowship/Hall at a rate of \$25.00 per meeting. Motion carried.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

The Willis Dady donation drive continues. We will be dropping off the supplies this Sunday, November 20. Thank you for your contributions!!

Bonnie presented the Advent schedule, as arranged by Music & Worship.

Next very brief meeting, Tuesday, December 13, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. Christmas dinner, games, and holiday cheer to follow, children and spouses welcomed. Council closed with "The Lord's Prayer." Meeting adjourned with a motion made by Pete, second by Merlin. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted

**Tanya Stewart, Secretary**