

ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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Zion HERALD April 2020 Volume 93 No. 4



VISION 2020

The first Vision 2020 potluck was held on Sunday, March 1st following worship. Approximately 35 members enjoyed a delicious potluck of homemade favorites followed by conversation. Focus groups addressed some general questions and then there were group-specific questions regarding MEMBERSHIP, WORSHIP, INVOLVEMENT and GIVING & FINANCES. The input will be used by the church council to for both short- and long-term congregational planning.

Here are the results of the large group discussion:

What are the top five attributes of being a Christian?

1. Faithfulness/Belief
2. Read the Bible
3. Forgiveness
4. Hospitality
5. Acceptance

What are the six most important attributes of being a member of Zion?

1. Worship Attendance
2. Financial Support
3. Involvement
4. Acceptance
5. Share Message of Christ (Inviting)
6. Offer Care and Prayer

In one sentence, what is a faithful Christian and how does that shape who we are as a member of the church?

- A faithful Christian attends church regularly; is giving of their talents, time and finances; and is willing to be an asset to the church family.
- A faithful Christian lives the life of Jesus Christ -- we are all sinners and by the grace of God we are saved.
- A faithful Christian is someone who lives their life in accordance with the teachings of the Bible.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the first phase of Vision 2020 planning. An additional potluck or focus gathering or two may be scheduled later in the year.

Aaron Horman, President
David Niermeyer, Vice-President
Janice Strackbein, Secretary
Sandy Esbaum, Treasurer

Randy Horman
Duane Lasack
Jon Mansfield



Greetings Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Part One:

I ask first that you right now take a moment with me for prayer.

Dear God, as we continue to travel on this road, we have no map for, remind us that you are right here with us. You are guiding us even if we don't feel it. But God, we want to feel your guiding hand, so please enable us to feel our faith in you so that we may share it with others. That is what will bring true comfort, peace, trust and hope on this unmapped road. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

On December 31, 2019, a pneumonia of unknown cause was first reported to the World Health Organization Country Office in China. It was detected in Wuhan, China. On January 21, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Washington State Department of Health announced the first case of 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the United States in Washington State.

As I write this letter from my office on March 24, 2020, there are 395,647 cases of COVID-19 worldwide, 46,485 in the USA and 105 in Iowa and 0 in Cedar County. Over the past 14 days, our federal and state governments have gradually increased recommendations for social distancing. In the past 4 weeks, the Dow Jones Industrial Average has dropped about 10,000 points, or about 1/3 its value. Grocery store shelves are empty in some areas and we have been told to stay home until this all passes.

How do we feel?

Many of us are doing just fine we say, others are a little shaken, while still others are very worried. Some people have asked me point blank, "Is God punishing us?" So please let me first reassure you, there is no one on this planet that can truly answer that question but asking that question usually comes with some degree of guilt or blaming on the part of the asker. Now the truthful answer to that question, I don't know, and no one knows except for God. Now answering that question is very dangerous, but self-evaluation is very safe, and it is part of our Christian faith especially during Lent. In fact, I strongly encourage self-evaluation, but not self-condemnation, or condemnation of others because we might think they are the cause of all this.

For Christians, the truth is we don't know why this is happening, but we do know that God is with us every step of the way. The truth is right now we are called to serve in the greatest capacity any person could be called to, that being to live as Jesus Christ. The truth is that it is not about living or dying, it is about serving God by helping others. The truth is that our future is and always has been secured by our faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my Sisters and Brothers, now is the time to set aside your worries and dig into God's work: love God by loving everyone, no matter who they are or what we think about them because we are all in this together. And please know this and be reassured by it, God is not following the social distancing recommendations because God is already inside each and every one of us. Praise be to God!

Part Two:

With the current status and possibility to exposure to COVID-19, we have suspended all worship services and activities at church until further notice.

- Regrettably and sadly that means we will not be able to **in person** rejoice to the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, but we will have an online worship service for Palm Sunday that I hope you will joyfully participate in at home.
- Our Maundy Thursday worship service will not be held, but we may have a release on YouTube of a special message to celebrate our Lord's Supper.
- On Easter, we will have an online worship service and we will, after our exile of social distancing is completed, gather in person in full force to celebrate Easter with all its joy and exuberant energy because Easter is not about a date, it is about the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
- Confirmation will also be rescheduled, and notice will be given so we will all be able to gather and support our newest members as they begin a new chapter in their journey of faith.

So, as we move forward, please be patient and have courage in Christ for Jesus said, "So, with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy" (John 16:22).

Thank you everyone and may God continue to bless us and keep us.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Steve

p.s. As I was working on my monthly newsletter, I was drawn to Scriptures found in John 16. As I read, I felt moved by a specific verse and used it in my newsletter. I rarely use just one verse ever. Then I went home for lunch. When I returned, the page was still open to John 16 and I just started to read it further. I believe I was meant to share this with you all.

"Do you now believe?" Jesus replied. "A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me."

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:31-33)
May God continue to watch over us and keep us.

USHERS

THIS
MONTH

APRIL USHER SCHEDULE

- | | |
|----------|---|
| April 5 | Church Council (10:15 Service) |
| April 12 | Donavon & Linda Freese, August Harms |
| April 19 | Jared Bentrott & Brett Esbaum |
| April 26 | Tanya & Keith Stewart, Dean & Mandi Behrens |

MAY USHER SCHEDULE

- | | |
|--------|--|
| May 3 | Church Council |
| May 10 | Royce & Lisa Gottschalk & Kyle & Melissa Gottschalk |
| May 17 | Eric & Ann Weiman, Brenda Esbaum, Sharon Kruckenberg |
| May 24 | Laettner Esbaum, Kip Esbaum, David Niermeyer |
| May 31 | Senior High Fellowship |

APRIL VIDEOGRAPHERS

- | | |
|----------|-----------------|
| April 19 | Jody Yutesler |
| April 26 | Julie Hoffmeier |

MAY VIDEOGRAPHER

- | | |
|--------|-----------------|
| May 3 | Cheryl Boedeker |
| May 10 | David Niermeyer |
| May 17 | Jean Stepp |
| May 24 | Donna Luepker |
| May 31 | Julie Hoffmeier |



Birthdays & Anniversaries

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|----------|-------------------------------|
| April 1 | Debbie Axline, Dean Hamdorf |
| April 4 | Cody Fields |
| April 5 | Jacob Holst |
| April 6 | David Niermeyer |
| April 7 | Steve Kahl |
| April 8 | Megan Hamdorf |
| April 9 | Evan D. Tjaden |
| April 14 | Kirk Steinke |
| April 15 | Quentin Wiedenhoff |
| April 18 | *Dean Frederick |
| April 20 | Lisa Hamdorf, Leighton Tjaden |
| April 23 | Dan Hamdorf |
| April 26 | Gladys Conrad |
| April 27 | Kelli Hamilton |
| April 29 | Stacy Traver |
| April 30 | Jody Yutesler |



Card... shower

APRIL BIRTHDAY CARD SHOWER

Honoring 80 years and over!!

April 26

Gladys Conrad, c/o Karen Bentrott,
122 Roosevelt Avenue, Lowden, Iowa 52255

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

April 2 , 1966
April 18, 1970
April 23, 1998
April 26. 1980
April 28, 2015
April 29, 1978

Dennis & *Diane Mostaert -54 years
Steve & Rhonda Poppe – 50 years
Jason & Shannon Hayton – 22 years
Gene & Jaynice Hamdorf – 40 years
Melissa & Kyle Gottschalk – 5 years
Gene & Linda Horman – 42 years



ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES

February 27, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Zion United Church of Christ council met February 27 at 7:00 p.m. President Aaron Horman called the meeting to order. Pastor Steve opened with a reading from Romans and a prayer. Attendees were Aaron Horman, Duane Lasack, Jon Mansfield, David Niermeyer, Jan Strackbein and Pastor Steve. Absent Randy Horman and Linda Behrens.

Joy and concerns were shared. Secretary's report read. Duane Lasack motion to approve minutes. David Niermeyer seconded. Motion carried. Treasurer's report read. David made a motion to accept, seconded by Duane. Jon reported \$10750.08 in Heating and Cooling Fund.

Calendar review:

March 1	Vision 2020 potluck and discussion
March 4	Lenten Service, Lowden Zion UCC with meal
March 8	Aldie & Marilyn 60 th wedding anniversary, Fellowship Hall
March 15	3 Confirmands statement of Faith
March 22	3 Confirmands statement of Faith
March 11	Lenten service, Bennett with meal
March 18	Lenten service, Wheatland with meal
March 25	Lenten service, Clarence with meal
April 1	Lenten service, Tipton with meal
April 5	Palm Sunday
April 9	Maundy Thursday, Zion, 7:00 p.m.
April 10	Good Friday, Wheatland, 7:00 p.m.
April 12	Easter

Pastor's report: Duane motion to accept, Jon seconded.

Old Business – Kids Night out-need volunteers.

Welcome back cards are being sent out again, one family came back at Christmas
Discussion on how to improve attendance

Eternal candle cord in place; spare bulbs in back room
Funeral guideline was discussed

Palm Sunday 1st Communion

New Business – Toll Bell, count 4 between pulls

Pew Communion-3 wine and 3 bread

Mr. Mooney will not be removing snow any longer. Jon will purchase new snow shovel.

The Herald amount must be at least 200 for bulk postage.

Rental of Fellowship Hall is set at \$25.00 fee.

There will not be a confirmation class next year.

Before the next confirmation class there will be guidelines set. This will be done by the council and the pastor.

Questions to be used at the Vision 2020 were planned.

Next Meeting will be March 19, 7:00 pm

David Niermeyer made a motion to adjourn, 2nd by Jon

Respectfully submitted.

Janice Strackbein, Secretary

SPECIAL MEETING OF CHURCH COUNCIL

March 1, 2020

March 1, 2020-A special meeting was called after the Vision 2020. All council members present.

Pastor Steve gave a prayer. President Aaron announced Sandy Esbaum has consented to be Zion United Church of Christ treasurer.

David Niermeyer made a motion to accept Sandy Esbaum as a member of Zion. seconded by Randy Horman. Duane Lasack made a motion to accept Sandy Esbaum as Zion United Church of Christ treasurer, 2nd by Jan. We will not need Greg Wiese, accountant by the end of March. Sandy will fill the position. President Aaron will relay to Secretary Linda Behrens that she can be relieved of financial duties.

David Niermeyer made a motion to adjourn, 2nd by Duane. Pastor Steve closed with A brief prayer.

Jan Strackbein, Secretary

Christian Education News:

We celebrated FAMILY DAY with many family members and students on February 23rd. We enjoyed a breakfast followed by a “An amazing Race” around church to find clues. They were successful and found GOD IS EVERYWHERE! We followed the afternoon with an outing to Dewitt for Bowling! Thank you to all the families for their time spent with us and hope everyone enjoyed themselves!

As Confirmation is almost here; I would like to recognize this class of 2020. I am very proud of each one of you!! Congratulations on this great accomplishment in your faith journey! May God's blessings be with you always!

CONGRATULATIONS to Johny Amina, Drew Behrens, Josselyn Easterly, Carter Horman, Jaydon Nabb, and Sophie Poppe.

Kelly Nabb

Zion United Church of Christ

Christian Education Coordinator

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(563) 249-2335 cell

jknabb@fbcom.net

zionucclowden.org

Missions Committee Meeting
March 15, 2020

Present: Linda Behrens, Jess Coppess, Megan Norman Pastor Steve Sue Monson
Carmen Fields, David Niemeyer Absent: Jan Olsen

Call to order: The meeting was called to order by Linda.

Approval of Minutes:

Carmen moved approval of the November 17 meeting minutes; Megan seconded. Minutes approved as distributed.

Financial Report:

Linda distributed the financial report. The two outstanding checks noted in the November minutes were reissued and sent directly to the organizations: 1 to Friends of the Animals and 1 to Willis Dady – both were donations Christian Education asked Missions to match.

There were 2 annual donations from 2019 that could not be distributed via our UCC conference, so Linda will send a check directly to those organizations – Water Wells and International Food for the Hungry.

The committee discussed the money we have invested in Vanguard. Due to the corona virus, stock markets are down and some of the money we made has been lost. The committee decided to leave the money in Vanguard in hopes that the market will rally, and we'll gain that money back. The committee will also take a \$7000 withdraw from the fund and deposit it into our checking account for our 2020 expenses, activities and donations. Megan moved approval of leaving the money in Vanguard and withdrawing \$7000 for our checking account, Sue seconded, and the motion was carried.

Old Business: The November 17 minutes noted the committee scheduled a meeting on January 19. That meeting was postponed to this March 15 meeting.

New Business:

The committee discussed donations of supplies for our next project.

- August – school supplies
- September – cleaning supplies
- October – food pantry
- November – office supplies

We will advertise what is needed each month in the Herald.

We also discussed having a breakfast on June 7 before church. This idea was tabled until we know more about the effects and timeline of the corona virus.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be May 3, 2020 after church.

Adjournment: Linda adjourned the meeting and Pastor Steve closed with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Jessica Coppess

NOTICE!!!

The Easter Spring Flowers will be postponed until we celebrate the “Easter Resurrection Service with all its joy and energy”, later this year. Thank you to those who have already contributed and donated. Please hold your checks until we contact you again for your Spring Flower order. Happy Spring!

Spring Dinner Announcement

The **Spring Dinner** which was scheduled for April 19, 2020 **has been postponed** until a later date because of circumstances beyond our control. The Spring Dinner Committee plans to reschedule and we will enjoy our “Spring Dinner” and fellowship at a date to be determined. We will contact the church members when we know more.

Information Corner

Our website address is www.zionuccclowden.org Secretary: Linda Behrens

Zion office hours Monday through Friday 8:30 to 12:00 Zion office phone #563-941-7726

email: zionucc@fbcom.net

Pastor Steve Stepp email: zionpastor@fbcom.net Phone #s- Office: 563-941-7529 Home:

563-941-5476 Office hours...Monday thru Thursday 9:00am-1:00pm **or** set up a time that works best for you.

Members of our Church Council

Aaron Horman-President, David Niermeyer- Vice President, Janice Strackbein, Secretary, Duane Lasack, Jon Mansfield, and Randy Horman.

Address changes/updates

If you are going away for a month or longer or are moving, please contact the church office to let Linda know so that you will receive your mail in a timely basis. Thank you!

God Is With Us!

Our lives have been upset, postponed, and put on hold because we have been sent home, immobilized, and asked to suspend our regular lives until the COVID-19 virus is contained, controlled, and confined, but we want to be sure that it is completely defeated, destroyed, and beaten into complete and utter submission otherwise we will continue to experience concern, apprehension and most likely anxiety about what the future holds for us.

Sisters and Brothers in Christ, we know what our future holds. Our ultimate future is the place where God lives and at God's place there is no pain, no suffering and no COVID-19. Of course, we still have a life to finish here, and most of us are in no hurry right now to move into God's place. But the wonderful thing for us is that God has moved into our place because the Holy Spirit lives in each and everyone of us. This undeniable fact is the most reassuring thing we can have right now in the midst of this virus crisis.

So with the knowledge and promise we have of God's presence in our lives through the Holy Spirit and with the knowledge and promise of our resurrection into the place of God, let us move forward without fear and follow Jesus' words of love and hope,



**"This is my commandment,
that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12).**

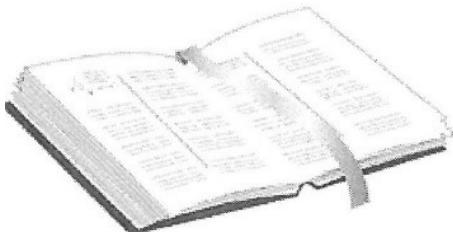
Now, what can we do to follow Jesus' commandment?

We follow and exceed all of our social quarantine, distancing and exile recommendations so that we can protect all of God's people. We follow all of the protocols for breaking the chain of transmission so that those who are around us, live with us, and care for us will be guarded, protected and shielded from contamination. We offer all the assistance, support and backing we can safely give to those who are serving on

the front lines of this viral war on humanity. We lift our prayers to God through the power of the Holy Spirit so that this crisis will be trounced, crushed, and wiped out. We plead for God to bring healing to those who are sick, for God to comfort those who mourn the loss of loved ones, and for God to watch over us and keep us so that we may have the strength to continue our vigilant and faithful efforts to fulfill our Christian call to serve.

Sisters and Brothers, I pray that we may all gather together in our new social distanced form as one great body of Christ and lift our prayers to God and rejoice in the knowledge that God is right here with us and that God will be with us until we can once again gather in person to the glory of God. Praise be to God! Amen.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Steve



Easter Story

Word Search

S	C	B	M	N	E	J	E	S	U	S	C	H	R	I	S	T
K	A	A	P	O	D	V	G	V	A	R	E	J	O	I	C	E
J	R	V	M	S	P	R	A	Y	E	R	W	C	B	V	F	S
Y	N	O	I	X	I	F	I	C	U	R	C	T	R	M	L	E
L	A	P	C	O	I	E	B	Q	O	X	B	B	N	O	O	L
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C	R	M	E	P	E	N	L	D	M	A	N	A	O	I	E	A
E	U	B	I	K	G	A	A	P	I	J	R	R	R	R	V	V
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B	S	M	N	D	I	S	C	I	P	L	E	S	C	X	G	S

APOSTLES
BETRAYAL
CAVE
CHURCH
CROSS
CROWN
CRUCIFIXION
DISCIPLES
FAITH
GOOD FRIDAY

JESUS CHRIST
JUDAS
LAMB
LAST SUPPER
LENT
MARY
MIRACLE
PASSOVER
PENANCE
PENTECOST

PRAYER
REDEMPTION
REJOICE
RESURRECTION
RISEN
SAVIOR
SON
THORNS
TOMB

