

**ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Nonprofit Org.  
402 Main Street  
P.O. Box 339  
Lowden, IA 52255-0339  
Rev. Stephen Stepp, Pastor

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**July/August 2020**

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**Information Corner**

Our website address is [www.zionucclowden.org](http://www.zionucclowden.org) Secretary: Linda Behrens  
**Zion office hours** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 8:30 to 12:00 Zion office phone #563-941-7726  
email: [zionucc@fbcom.net](mailto:zionucc@fbcom.net)  
**Pastor Steve Stepp** email: [zionpastor@fbcom.net](mailto: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, Sandy Esbaum-Treasurer, 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!

## ***Message from the Church Council***

We began the year 2020 with the question of “What does God have in store for Zion?” At that time, we were unaware that a global Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic would cause us to embrace online worship and follow social distancing measures. We also did not know that God was calling Pastor Steve to a different church ministry. While this decade has not started how we expected, we know that our faith in Jesus Christ has and will continue to sustain each of us and our congregation as we move forward on our journey.

It is with mixed emotions that we share in the joy of Pastor Steve’s new call to serve his home church in Fond Du Lac, Wisconsin. We give great thanks to Pastor Steve and Jean for their nearly nine years of service at Zion. Together, we have grown and changed as a congregation in the name of Jesus Christ. Pastor Steve’s last Sunday with us will be Aug. 30, 2020. Social distancing measures will make it difficult to offer a traditional Zion farewell; however, the council will be working on a safe way for everyone to offer their goodbyes and recognize Pastor Steve’s time of ministry with us. Enclosed in this newsletter is a “memories” sheet. If you are so inclined, we ask you to write a brief message that will be compiled in a keepsake book for the Steps. We are planning a farewell worship service for Aug. 30.

The council has engaged the assistance of the Iowa Conference staff to guide us on our next steps as we make plans to transition our pastoral leadership.

### **COVID-19 SAFETY MEASURES**

#### ***WORSHIP SERVICES***

In-person worship resumed the first Sunday in June with many social distancing measures in place to protect members. If you plan to attend worship, we look forward to seeing you. If you have decided to stay home for a while longer, we understand and respect your decision. Services continue to be live streamed on Facebook. Services will also be posted to our YouTube Channel later in the day and later in the week on local cable channels.

In-person worship is now different. There are many precautions that we take for the safety of all members who choose to worship in person. We have moved furniture, marked off pews to promote minimum six-foot social distancing and we are not using hymnals or Bibles. The service bulletin is available on the screen and we are refraining from hymn singing. We ask that everyone enter only through the main entrance doors. A church council member will greet you at the door and usher you to a seat. Ushers will also dismiss you at the conclusion of the service. We appreciate your cooperation as we are all adapting to this new way of worship.

With an increasing number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Cedar and surrounding counties, the church council has made the decision to REQUIRE wearing a cloth face covering or mask while attending worship services or other events until further notice. We ask that you wear a face covering as you enter the church, while in the sanctuary for the duration of the service and as you exit. Per CDC guidance, masks may be safely worn by anyone age 2 and older except those with breathing problems. A limited number of masks are available as you enter the church. Hand sanitizer stations are setup throughout the church. The pews and high-touch areas are being sanitized regularly.

**We encourage our members who are most at-risk to continue to worship with us at home; according to the CDC guidance, this includes anyone who is age 65 and older or those with underlying health conditions. If you have a fever, exhibit respiratory symptoms or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or otherwise potentially been exposed to COVID-19 within the past 14 days, please stay home.** If you do choose to attend worship in person and later develop symptoms or are diagnosed

with COVID-19 within 14 days, you should immediately contact the church office so appropriate precautions can be taken.

Worship service modifications with social distancing protocols and enhanced cleaning and sanitizing will be in place until further notice.

### **ORGANIZATION MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

Beginning July 1, church organizations and committees may again meet in person. The church council recommends following all CDC guidance, which includes practicing minimum six-foot social distancing (e.g. everyone sitting at their own table in Fellowship Hall) and wearing a cloth face covering or mask. Groups should refrain from serving food and beverages. New events or use of church facilities for outside events such as baby showers or community meetings continue to be suspended. These guidelines are in place at least through Aug. 30. If you have questions or concerns, please direct them to council president Aaron Horman.

### **ONLINE GIVING**

We are blessed by God's presence both in our lives and throughout our faith community. Our ministry at Zion is vibrant and God is at work here in ways that continue to amaze us. We invite you to support our ministry by offering a financial gift. In addition to traditional giving methods, we now offer the ability to initiate an online gift by going to our website at [www.zionucclowden.org](http://www.zionucclowden.org).

We encourage members to establish an automatic giving routine. Automatic giving not only provides convenience in our busy lives but it gives the church needed consistency so we can plan and budget for our expenses.

- **Direct Debit.** If you bank at American Trust & Savings Bank, Lowden, an automatic debit from your bank account can be scheduled for your gift to Zion. This is a one-time election for a weekly contribution and can be cancelled upon request. Please contact the church office for details.
- **Online Banking Payment.** Most other financial institutions offer an online bill payment system that allows you to schedule recurring payments. A weekly or monthly transaction can be created that automatically sends a check via postal mail to the church. This is usually a free service from your bank. If you are not familiar with your online banking options, our financial secretary can guide you through the process in working with your financial institution to setup up your recurring gift.

### **CHURCH FURNACE & AIR CONDITIONER REPLACEMENT**

We are pleased to report that we were able to achieve our initial fundraising goal to replace the north air conditioner and furnace. Funds arrived just in time as the air conditioner did not work when we turned it on for the first time this spring. The new unit was installed in early June. We are thankful to everyone who contributed to make this possible. The existing south air conditioner continues to operate; however, it will need to be replaced soon. We continue to seek contributions toward replacing this unit. You can help us meet our next fundraising goal of approximately \$11,500 with any gift – large or small. Contributions may be sent directly to the church or placed in the weekly offering collection marked "Heating & Cooling Fund."

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

Randy Horman  
Duane Lasack  
Jon Mansfield



My Beloved Sisters and Brothers,

God has revealed many things to me over the course of my life, and I believe that God plans to continue these revelations in my journey through life. One of the most important things God has shown me about myself is that I travel in circles for God.

When I was about nine years old, I fell through the ice and was saved by an unlikely boy from my school. Nine years later, I flew out of a boat traveling at 40 knots on Lake Winnebago, and I saved a girl who would have drowned. God had brought me full circle from being the one saved to being the one who saved. I was humbled by God's work.

When I was in High School, I began my career in the restaurant business by being a dishwasher and cook at Schreiner's Restaurant. After collage, I worked my way up the corporate ladder as a General Manager and Food & Beverage Director at different hotels and restaurants. My last job in food service was a cook at a retirement home for Catholic sisters. God had brought me full circle in the hospitality business, and again I was humbled by God's work.

Then God called me to begin a new journey in my life. A journey that would take me to seminary and become an ordained pastor. On my last day of orientation at Seminary, my family loaded up the truck and pulled out of the housing unit parking lot. I remember waving with tears rolling down my face thinking, they will turn around and come back for me. I waited for twenty minutes, but they never turned around. I suffered from great loneliness for many weeks until God touched me and reassured me that was where God wanted me. At that moment, I knew, beyond a shadow of a doubt that I was not alone, God was right there with me. About nine weeks from now, I will return to the home I grew up in and the church I grew up in. I feel God's call in my heart and even as I write this, I have tears rolling down my face. I know that this is the next circle that God will complete in my life, and I am humbled by God's work.

I hope and pray that you will all share in my GREAT JOY to do God's work even as it causes tears to roll down our faces. Now, may the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious upon you. May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you now and always, and grant you that wonderful peace, joy, love, and hope that is found in Jesus Christ! Amen.

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Steve

*<sup>5</sup> Trust in the LORD with all your heart  
and lean not on your own understanding;  
<sup>6</sup> in all your ways submit to him,  
and he will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5-6*

**VIDEOGRAPHERS FOR JULY**

July 5 Cheryl Boedeker  
 July 12 Aaron Horman  
 July 19 Donna Luepker  
 July 26 Jody Yutesler

**VIDEOGRAPHERS FOR AUGUST**

August 2 Julie Hoffmeier  
 August 9 David Niermeyer  
 August 16 Jean Stepp  
 August 23 Cheryl Boedeker  
 August 30 Aaron Horman

**JULY BIRTHDAYS**

July 2 Stella Fox, Zoe Fox, Abigail Fox  
 July 3 Lou Krafock  
 July 5 Keith Stewart  
 July 7 August Harms, Stacie Luepker  
 July 9 Nathan Nabb  
 July 11 Darrell Yutesler,  
 July 12 Donna Luepker  
 July 16 Nick Combs  
 July 17 Leroy Luepker  
 July 18 Beth Kahl  
 July 19 Ian Fox,  
 July 20 Sue Monson,  
 July 22 Dalton Yutesler  
 July 23 Gene Hamdorf, Diane Esbaum  
 July 25 Mike Jensen  
 July 26 Carmen Fields,  
 July 27 Mary Louise Horman,  
 July 28 Janis Krafock, Shandon  
 Hoffmeier, Kelli Esbaum  
 July 31 \*Christy Combs

July 3

July 2

**Card Shower**

Lou Krafock. 95 Main Street.  
 Lowden, Iowa 52255  
 Mary Louise Horman, P.O. Box 448,  
 Lowden, Iowa 52255

**Happy Anniversary!****JULY ANNIVERSARIES**

July 6	Jacob & Heidi Neill	17 yrs.
July 12	Jennifer & *Patrick Glover	12 yrs.
July 16	Nick & *Christy Combs	15 yrs.
July 19	Dave & Rose Horman	45 yrs.
July 27	Aaron & Megan Horman	18 yrs.
July 27	Brian & Carolee Lohman	24 yrs.
July 30	Al & Vicki Mohr	44 yrs.

**AUGUST BIRTHDAYS**

August 3	Mary Huffman, Londyn Rose Kahl	August 18	Bill Elijah
August 4	Heather Easterly	August 20	Brad Norton, Kim Klahn, Joby Proesch
August 7	Judy Proesch	August 21	Leon Kohlhoff
August 11	Sharon Kruckenber, Jennifer Frederick	August 23	Adam Horman, Mariah Behrens
August 14	Marilyn Klahn, Allen Koch	August 25	Bob Fields III
August 15	*Brian Armstrong, Robert O'Howell	August 26	Dennis Boedeker
		August 28	*Jason Hayton
		August 29	Sandra Horman, Janine Fadale
		August 30	Brynn Kahl
		August 31	Madelynn Sherrill

**AUGUST CARD SHOWER**

August 14 Allen Koch, 66 Hoover Highway,  
 PO Box 147  
 Lowden, Iowa 52255  
 August 14 Marilyn Klahn, 111 Grant Avenue,  
 Lowden, IA 52255  
 August 18 Bill Elijah, 680 Spicer Avenue,  
 Lowden, IA 52255

**AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES**

August 1	Duane & Terry Lasack	50 Years
	Lonnie & Stacie Luepker	28 Years
August 14	Wilbert & Millie Muhs	50 Years
August 19	Mike & Pam Jensen	37 Years
August 26	Leroy & Donna Luepker	59 Years
August 30	Kevin & Beth Kahl	45 Years

## Message from the Spring Dinner Committee

With the cancellation of the Spring Dinner, your Committee was hoping to host a summer social or other community event to replace this annual fundraising event. COVID-19 has other ideas and it is not going to be possible for your Committee to safely undertake other options. Since the Spring Dinner is a fundraising event to advance Zion's ministries, we respectfully ask you to consider one or more of the following options:

- If you signed up as a sponsor for the Spring Dinner, please fulfill that commitment
- If you signed up to prepare and donate food or were assigned that task for the Spring Dinner, please make a donation for the value of the ingredients and your time to prepare the food
- If you would have purchased tickets (at \$10/each) for you and your family or if you would have purchased carryout meals, please donate a like amount
- If you received a card in the mail for a nominal donation, please follow through on that request
- If you were signed up for or were assigned a job, please donate the value of your time to do that job

Your Spring Dinner Committee will be back in full force next year, ready to carry out this important fundraising event under more "normal" circumstances. In the meantime, we respectfully ask you to consider doing what you can to fill this year's void by making a donation payable to the **Zion Spring Dinner on or before August 15th**. Please send to the church (402 Main Street, Lowden, Iowa 52255) or drop off whatever donation you are comfortable making to the church office, or leave it in the offering plate the next time you are in church.

Grace and peace to you,  
Zion Spring Dinner Committee

## **ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**April 16, 2020**

The Zion United Church of Christ Church Council met via conference call at 7:00 p.m. on April 16, 2020. In attendance were Aaron Horman, Randy Horman, Jon Mansfield, Duane Lasack, David Niermeyer, and Pastor Steve. Sandra Esbaum absent. Pastor Steve Stepp opened with a prayer and interesting fact that in 1918 there was a Spanish Flu epidemic that there were 93,000 deaths. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Randy Horman, seconded by David.

Financial reports: note that there is a \$10,000.00 in Memorial (Kent Strackbein) can the installation of the north unit of heat and air conditioning. David made the motion, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jon.

Pastor's report and calendar given. Pastor has started Bible study which will be on Zoom and there are 4 participants presently studying 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians. Will decide on vacation after Covid19 has subsided. Pastor is thinking of starting "common coffee time" or drink next week on Monday or Tuesday for half hour. Duane made a motion to accept the report, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jon.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

We are monitoring the suspension of church services. The council decided to reduce the hours of the church office to be 2 half days. Linda will be there Tuesday and Thursday. David made a motion, Randy 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. Aaron discussed that we should consider "Small Business Administration-Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) forgiven loan. Jon made the motion, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Randy. Implement the decision have electronic newsletter. Duane made a motion, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jan. Randy made a motion, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jon to comprise a letter/envelope to be sent to church members regarding continued gifts to the church.

Aaron will visit with Sandy, treasurer, about setting up an online giving. Randy made a motion, 2<sup>nd</sup> by David.

We have received the memorial from the Pete Penningroth estate. We will discuss that at a later date. Motion made by David, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Duane. David made a motion to adjourn, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jon. NEXT meeting: May 21, 2020.

Respectfully submitted

Janice Strackbein, Secretary

**ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
May 21, 2020**

The Zion United Church of Christ Church Council met May 21, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. In attendance were Aaron Horman, Randy Horman, Jon Mansfield, Duane Lasack, David Niermeyer, Sandy Esbaum, Janice Strackbein and Pastor Steve. Pastor Steve Stepp opened with a prayer and interesting facts on a reading "Getting on God's Good Side." Minutes were approved, motion by Randy, seconded by Duane.

Treasurer report was compared with 2019-2020 and had a discussion due to the pandemic and no church. David made a motion to accept report, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jon.

Pastor's report: Pastor will take vacation from June 10-17. Continuing business: Easterly family will be moving from the area. Josselyn will be confirmed before they moved. Jon Mansfield and Jan Strackbein will represent the council in June for Josselyn's confirmation.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

The Ted Licht family wish to rejoin the church. Duane made a motion, 2<sup>nd</sup> by David.

2020 graduates are Mariah Behrens, Jacob Gottschalk, and Addison Luepker. Sweatshirt were given to them.

Church services start June 7 at 9:30 am with guidelines of caution to protect everyone. Worship service will be live streaming also. David made the motion, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jon to start on June 7. The new starting time was made into a motion by David, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Janice. PPP loan was approved motion made by David, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jon. Aaron announced that the secretary will be in the office 3 days a week. First part of the Heating and cooling ordered and installed

NEXT meeting: June 18, 2020, at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Janice Strackbein, Secretary



# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

It is with heavy hearts that we announce that VBS 2020 is postponed....After meeting with St. John's we have come to the hard decision that we will hold off on Rocky Railway VBS for this year. There are too many unknown factors at the moment, and we would feel better in making sure that all of our volunteers as well as our kids stay safe and healthy

through all of this. We decided that since we cannot offer the "normal" VBS experience, which all of us love and feel is the best way for the kids to learn, we will not be turning to the virtual route to bring this to you. We do look to review some of the songs and messages from last year in a simpler way so please look for that near the end of July. Thank you for your patience while we made this decision and we look forward to planning for next year and seeing everyone there.

## STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH



Our nation is amazingly diverse, representing different cultures and ethnic backgrounds. Yet most of us live in communities marked by sameness, among people who think, act, and look like us. The vision of Pentecost is to experience unity among a diverse crowd. Yet how do we realize this vision?

Through the funds provided by the Strengthen the Church Offering, The Penn West Conference provides a wonderful example. To support youth programming, this year, the Conference awarded grants to First Church in Irwin and First Church in Greensburg to send young people to the National Youth Event (NYE). Conference Minister David Ackerman explains why it matters, saying, "At National Youth Event, our youth get a sense of the width and breadth of the UCC. Most of our youth come from smaller rural churches. At NYE, they meet other youth from different backgrounds and come away with a sense of being united."

Every UCC conference uses your generous gifts to Strengthen the Church. The grants provided by the Penn West Conference will help young people, at a national gathering, experience God's dream of a truly united and uniting Church, amid differences in cultures and backgrounds. Every Conference faithfully uses your gift to invest in God's vision for the Church.

Please give generously to the Strengthen the Church Offering on May 31st. Together, we can invest in God's vision of Church.

How is a minister formed and prepared for ministry at every stage of their vocation?

Ministers are formed like Jeff, who discerned a call to ministry while participating in a UCC-related summer camp. And they are formed like Darrell, who found a home in the UCC as the congregation he founded voted to affiliate with the denomination. And, like Kaji and Jennifer, they are formed in part through a heritage of generational church leadership in the pulpit and beyond.

Through it all, the Pentecost Spirit blows where She will, inspiring and calling forth new generations of leaders. Nurtured and challenged in congregations, supported by committees on ministry, and further shaped through educational experiences, these leaders become authorized for ministry in and on behalf of the UCC.

**Do you ever wonder how the UCC prepares individuals for ministry and continuing authorization within the UCC?**

The Ministerial Excellence, Support, and Authorization (MESA) Ministry Team thinks about ministerial formation and continuing authorization every day. Committed to the vision that every ministry setting deserves gifted and accountable pastoral leadership, MESA shares the Church's best practices for ministerial formation, authorization, and ongoing oversight through training, resources, and cooperation with Associations and Conferences.

MESA's most recent Manual on Ministry, published a year ago, provides practices and resources to support the UCC in their work to provide discernment, authorization, and oversight of ministers in the UCC.

Please give generously to the Strengthen the Church Offering on May 31, 2020. You will support MESA and help people like Jennifer, Darrell, Kaji, and Jeff respond to the Spirit of God, leading them to new missions and ministries.

As Pastor Steve and Jean embark on a new journey, we invite you to reflect on a favorite memory, write a brief message of thanks or share a special photo to commemorate their time with us at Zion. We plan to compile a Memory Book that we will present to the Stepps during the farewell worship service on Sunday, Aug. 30. These tributes are an opportunity to express love and gratitude for Pastor Steve's faithful 8-1/2 years of service. The Memory Book will be assembled with the utmost respect for confidentiality and privacy.

Please use this form to include your memory or use your own special paper. Please give submissions to Megan Horman, send it via postal mail to P.O. Box 422, Lowden, IA 52255, e-mail it to [hormanm@fbcom.net](mailto:hormanm@fbcom.net) or put it in an enveloped marked "Memory Book" and turn it into the church office. The deadline for submissions is Aug. 16.

## ***Memories***