

## ***Lent***

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on February 14.

Our first Lent Midweek service will be on **February 21 at Zion**. We will alternate with Bethlehem as usual. We will follow the pattern we have in recent years with a meal at 6:00 followed by some type of learning activity and worship. The topic has not yet been determined so if you have ideas, please let me know.

**The Sunday mornings in Lent will be a series called “Learning from Jesus.”**

### **Contact Information**

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## ***GOOD THINGS FROM ZION***

*January/February 2017*

**Encounter Christ...Grow in faith...Love as Christ loved...Tell the Story**

### ***The Year in Review***

Blessings to all of you as we begin this new year. In January, the newsletter does two things – first, I go through a “year in review” which serves as my annual report. As a spirituality practice, that’s known as an examen.

What were the highpoints of the year? What were some of the reactions and feelings surrounding things we did? What worked and what didn’t?

In an examen, you next look at God’s activity in the midst of those events, activities and feelings and look for what it might say about where God is leading us in the coming year. The second part of the newsletter looks forward to my thoughts and ideas for the coming year. I am always open to other ideas...I would especially appreciate some input for our Lent services, especially ideas you might have for topics or activities.

### **Pastoral Acts**

On March 5, Isabel Wright, and Evie and Gracie Hofmeister received First Communion

### **Worship**

In commemoration of the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary we have been working our way through Luther’s Small Catechism in the sermons. We’ve completed the Ten Commandments and the Creed. We have the Lord’s Prayer, Communion and Baptism left. We will finish by Lent and start something new. Worship attendance has been fairly steady around 25. If everyone who comes at least somewhat regularly came on the same Sunday we would have 46. This is perhaps my biggest struggle as a pastor.

### **Adult Education**

Also as part of the Reformation 500 observation Megan Patent-Nygren has been leading an adult small group study called *By Heart*, based on the Small Catechism. Feedback indicates that it is quality material, but probably too much and too dense. This is something we will likely try again, only with something a little shorter and easier to work with.

A Bethlehem-Zion women’s group has continued to meet roughly monthly. We’ve used a variety of sources for discussion. There have regularly been 5 – 7 women in attendance.

### **Children’s Education**

We have nine children in Sunday school. Diane Sabatka-Rine teaches the older group and Carol Mintzmeyer the younger. If not this year, then the next, we will have a third group starting. We will be needing volunteers to help with the teaching.

We did our own Christmas Program this year. It was amazing!

## Service/Giving

We have been giving \$50 monthly to the Saunders County Ministerial Food Pantry

We collected health care items during Lent for Clinic With a Heart in Lincoln

We've shared worship with the folks at South Haven Living Center

We had a table at the Freed for Life dinner which supports the Nebraska Synod prison and transitional ministries

You donated \$140 for the Bridges to Hope Bike-A-Thon in which Pastor Kris rode a miserable, wet 18 miles.

A portion of our BBQ proceeds went to the Lutheran Disaster Response for hurricane relief

We've supported the mission of the Nebraska Synod with our Mission Share of \$4000 annually

We've given to Oaks Indian Mission with our Lent offerings and Mosaic with Christmas Eve offering

## Online Presence

I continue to update the website and post things on the church Facebook page

It is a blessing to me to have continued to serve God's world with you all this past year. I look forward to the coming year and new opportunities to grow and serve.

In Christ's peace,

*Pastor Kris*

## The Coming Year

**Worship**—we have been through the Narrative Lectionary cycle once (4 years) and this year the series on Luther's Small Catechism. I love the Narrative Lectionary but I'm considering going back to the old Revised Common Lectionary for at least a year to keep things fresh. It would also give us a chance to focus a little on the rhythm of the church year. There are also more Sunday school resources to go with the RCL than the NL, although that's changing a little.

**Digital world**—As someone for whom most of my life thus far was lived before the digital age, I've probably done pretty well. But in this day and age, the spread of the gospel to people who don't show up on Sunday and whom we may never encounter face to face will be through a digital platform. Digital resources will also become increasingly important for those in the church as well. I'm hoping to use some continuing education money and time to learn more about how to effectively use our online presence for ministry

**Education**—We have a very vital Sunday school. I continue to hope we can also grow some adult education activities and cross-generational activities. It's hard enough to get kids to remain engaged in the church as they get older, and if they don't have adult role models who are actively seeking to learn, grow and serve, it will be even harder. I am always open to ideas for topics, events, etc.

## January/February Calendar

January 21	9:00 am—Worship Annual meeting immediately after worship
January 23	6:00 pm—Women's group
January 28	9:00 am—Worship—Blessing for those working in computers and IT, human resources 9:45—Sunday School Final <i>By Heart</i> small group session
February 4	9:00 am—Worship with Holy Communion 9:45—Sunday school 2:15—Worship at South Haven
February 11	9:00 am—Worship—Blessing of people who work in maintenance, grounds keeping, and waste management
February 14	8:00 pm—Ash Wednesday worship—Holy Communion and the Imposition of Ashes
February 18	9:00 am—Worship 9:45—Sunday school
February 21	6:00 pm— <b>Lent Midweek at Zion</b>
February 25	9:00 am—Worship

## Looking Ahead

Upcoming blessings:

- January 28—Computers, IT, Human Resources
- Feb. 11—Maintenance, property management, grounds keepers, waste management
- March 11—Manufacturing, shipping, utilities
- March 18—Construction, trades (plumbing, electricians, HVAC, etc)

## First Communion—March 4

First Communion typically happens in third grade, but it's up to parents if they feel their child is ready at a younger age. We will have a First Communion class at 10:00 am on Saturday March 3. It will last about 2 hours which will include lunch. Then they will take communion for the first time during worship on March 4

## February Helpers

Cleaners—Todd/Luetkenhaus

Lectors—tbd

Ushers—Todd/Luetkenhaus

Communion Assistant—tbd

Before March you will receive a schedule

## Phone Number

To reach Pastor Kris, please use the cell phone number  
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