

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

JUNE/JULY 2020 WELCOME TO ZION! VOL XXX ISSUE VII

FROM THE PASTOR

Reflection on ELCA Social Statement on Criminal Justice

"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. [Jer. 29: 12]"

These words of promise are spoken by the prophet, Jeremiah, (one of my favorite prophet guys) to the exiles in Babylon. He speaks to them in letters from afar in Jerusalem because he cannot be with them physically. Rather than telling them to pray to get back home to Jerusalem as fast as they can, he encourages them to pray for those who hold them captive, to continue to worship, to understand they are in this for what will feel like too long to bear (70 years=a long time), and to remember who they are, beloved children of God.

This is our starting point inside Denver Women's Correctional Facility as I attempt to bring the light of Christ into an otherwise largely dim place. Whether it is a woman's first experience with incarceration or her seventh; whether she's been down for six months or sixteen years, living inside the walls of barbed wire estranged from the activities of our communities outside, feels like exile.

The cries of "how long LORD?" go largely unheard except by their sisters who have the presence of mind to listen, and by someone called by the Spirit to listen and respond with Christ's promise. It is a promise the women hear clearly through the words of the prophet, Jeremiah, as he tells other exiles to amend their ways and their doings because God has a plan for them for a future with hope.

No one benefits within the system of incarceration if there is no hope. From my perspective as one called to serve this vulnerable community, hope begins with encouraging the incarcerated to hear Christ speaking to them. Christ promises them they too are beloved. They too belong to community. Christ has a plan for them. They have a purpose in life. They are much more than a number or the worst thing they ever did in their life. They belong to God, and God has a plan for them. There is hope. 1

As pastor and chaplain inside this prison, I often encourage the women to not only hear the promise of hope for themselves, but to acknowledge that we're all leveled at the cross. This means that instead of mirroring the attitude of society outside that too often declares one's self-worth according to our own accomplishments or lack of public misdeeds, we, as a faith community, encourage everyone to understand one's self-worth in terms of the cross.

It is at the cross that we understand who God is and that the cross forms us all as sisters and brothers equally in Christ. All, regardless of on what side of a wall we reside, are siblings at the foot of the cross.

This is God's justice; not an eternity of gnashing of teeth behind barbed wire. We, as a church, have fallen short of the common life together we confess when we fail to acknowledge our sisters and brothers behind bars.

My own sense of call is to walk with incarcerated women, whether they were wrongly or rightly convicted, encouraging them to find their voice. This includes expressing their remorse to their victims, repentance, sharing their grief and sorrow with their parents and children, and praying with their incarcerated sisters to give them hope along the way.

Much still needs to be addressed systemically in the criminal justice system. This reflection doesn't even begin to address the cultural injustice of the imbalance of incarcerated persons along the racial, economic and educational divide. It doesn't begin to address the misuse of incarceration for the mentally ill and the drug addicted. It doesn't begin to address the culture of domestic violence against women that lands women in prison for crimes others committed against their children.

Instead, this reflection will begin and end with the vision of hope as God encourages us to hear, that we along with our siblings behind barbed wire, are all experiencing some sort of feeling of exile from life as we think we would design it if we were God. But we are not God.

I walk into the prison in these days of COVID 19, and the women walking their laps in the yard to get some exercise and sunshine shout out, "Hi, Pastor Terry. Come walk with me!"

They know shouting across the yard is against the prison rules. The officers in the yard look at me and shake their finger at me. Then they smile and motion for me to go walk with my sisters.

There is hope. The system is changing. The church needs to hear the cries of the people and join in the walk. We are not all the same. Still, we are all called to walk together according to our ability and talents. The walk is long-- a proverbial 70 years.

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“Then when you call upon me and come to pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart. I will let you find me, says the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.” (Jer. 29:12-14)

May it be so.

Questions for reflection:

What does it mean as a church in today’s world to find our voice?

Spiritually, what does it mean to *walk* together, making new roads?\

Pastor Terry Schjang

Date Attendance Collection

Donations and expenses from June 1 thru July 23

Total Donations \$3,066.23

Total expenses \$2853.11

We are covering costs but just barely

From the Council

May 3 . 2010 1:00 p.m. via Zom

Attendees: Stephanie Behring, Peggy Hickam
Barbara Stoffer, Donna Swanson, Pam Thomas,
and Gary Wittenberg.

The first order of business was discussion regarding
The generous use of Dave Slaymaker's Zoom
Account for church services and other meetings.
In appreciation Council decided to provide some
Financial help for the monthly meetings.

Americore will be working on a housing project in our
area and are looking for housing for volunteers. Pam will
contact Americore to let them know we do not feel we can
make a decision at this time. We would like to wait to see
what sort of outcome may come about with the lifting of
gatherings and health restrictions. We shall keep them
posted of any possibilities.

Council approved the purchase of a microphone to be used
by Nancy to help audio clarity for the music and singing
during services.

The question came up of when we might be able to be able
to hold services in church again. Because we don't know
what to expect with the changes that are happening re-
garding gatherings and changes in restrictions. It was de-
cided we should be on the cautious side and wait awhile
before making any decisions.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.
Respectfully submitted: Donna Swanson

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From the Council

June 7, 2020

Minutes from council meeting yester-
day: Stephanie, Peggy, Bryce, Pam

Lori - Minutes from council meeting for News-
letter

Zion Minutes ...

... if they are interested. Calls from members
to members to show our care and support for
one another would be lovely. With no further
business the meeting was adjourned. Respect-
fully submitted: Donna Swanson

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Your Council Members Are

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FROM THE COUNCIL
July 23, 2020 Minutes

Attendees:

Pam Thomas, Lori Albers, Judy Murphy, Barb Stoffers, Donna Swanson, Gary Wattenberg

Opening discussion: The Yordy's grand-son is living with them at the present time and he would like to park his car in the downstairs parking area. Council approved the request and will contact Mike and Connie with approval.

A friend of Pam's works with a youth group ("Kids At Their Best") who asked if they could spend an overnight at the Church some time in August. The group's plans are to do some hiking and participate in Leadership Training. Council approved the request. When a date has been decided upon Jimmy will be notified of the overnight stay.

The next item of business was planning for Zion's 125th Anniversary. At our Sunday Zoom worship service some very good ideas and suggestions were made to get things started. Because we don't know when the Coronavirus problems will end, suggestions were made which would be a good way to start the Celebration - beginning in this September and continuing through September of 2021. So -- to praise and give thanks to our God, His Son, and the Holy Spirit for all of the gifts and guidance through the past 125 years and to honor the Swedish Founders, the Pastors, the members and friends who have served the communities of Clear Creek County through Zion's history, we will begin our celebration with focusing on kindness and gratitude.

Focusing on and noticing GRATITUDE when you see it or at least feel I in our own life can be a way of thanks for what has been given to you— a way to honor

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God our church Pastors, members,. and friend. Tally up each time you feel gratitude - kindness awareness to ourselves 125 days of the year.

Council meets the first part of August to finalize a way to track what we are doing. A tree made of construction paper will be made up and placed on a wall. We will have construction paper leaves available *as many as you need to attach to the tree to show our KINDNESS AND GRATITUDE growing. More information and clarity after the August meeting.

Respectfully submitter,
Donna Swanson

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Belated

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

June

Ella Brecht	June 5
Jessica Behring	June 14
Eric Nordine	June 22
Bill VanVorst	June 26

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Belated

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

July

Pam Phipps	July 3
Jaylin VanVorst	July 10
Andrew Brecht	July 11
Stephanie Bering	July 14
Gene Wattenberg	July 14
Audrey Keller	July 20

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The Funny Side of Faith

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY
AUGUST**

Deborah Davies August 21

* * *

Prayer Requests

For those recovering from sickness, and/or surgery For those in grief, For those needing wisdom For those needing strength, For those in the community, For those in fire, flood, typhoons, and hurricanes areas, in the world, For comfort and guidance: all the troops worldwide and their families our children, teenagers, and parents, all those traveling, Lutheran Campus Ministry, Urban Servant Corps, ., for peace in the Middle East, for the whole church around the world, especially our companion

Synods of the Malagasy Lutheran church, the Mahayana and Antsiranana Synods, all lay evangelists who risk their lives to preach the Gospel, and Zion Lutheran Church in this time of transition and revitalization of membership. If pastoral services are needed please contact the Church Office

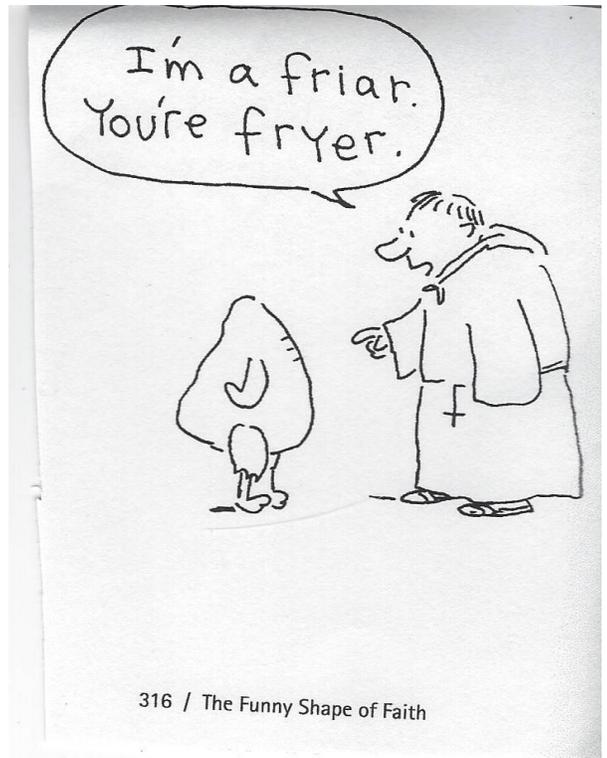
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**Additional Bulletin Announcements
Sermons have been added to the web page**

If you miss church you can listen to them by hitting "Worship" tab on the website selecting "Sermons" from the dropdown menu, or click on this link.

www.zion-lutheran-church.com/sermons.html

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THE HOLY AND THE HOLEY

Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said to himself, "Can a child be born to A man who is a hundred years old? Can Sarah. Who is ninety years old, bear a child?"

It's fun to look a the frier and the fryer and giggle.

When something is holy—not full of holes "holey," or completely there "wholly." but sacred and from God "holy," it brings a smile to our hearts. Sometimes when the holy breaks into our everyday world, it breaks through our preconceptions and helps us giggle s bit. t helps us remember that the world and everything in it are God's.

And Things are possible with God. And God likes to play.

God of possibilities, help[us to see the Wholly holy. Help us to see your hand in our work. Help us to see your handwork and to smile in our hearts, Amen.

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Providing Food and Support to Clear Creek and Gilpin Counties

Please don't forget about our local food Bank **Loaves and Fishes** serves almost 100 families a week. That is 100 cans of tuna, 100 macaroni and cheese, 100 rolls of toilet paper and on and on. There are many homeless living in their cars in Clear Creek County. They cannot afford the gas to find a job. Loaves and Fishes also has special programs for school age children to help supplement meals on weekends and during the summers months as well as help provide to provide school supplies.

Please remember the hungry this summer and bring something to church every Sunday

Almost always needed:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Toilet Paper | Jelly |
| Macaroni and Cheese | Canned beans |
| Tuna | Boxed Cereal |
| Peanut butter | Canned fruit |

It is through your support that we will be able to give to those "who have nothing prepared".

Of course, we are grateful fur all donations, now and throughout the year

Hours:

- Food stocking and distribution
- Thursdays 10:00 am to 6:00 pm
- Fridays 11:00 am to 4:00 pm

Directions

Loaves and Fishes is located on hwy 103. Behind Evergreen Sport and Spinal

ZION MEMBERS REMEMBER THE PURPLE TUB-DOWNSTAIRS FOR ITEMS FOR LOAVES & FISHES

LOAVES & FISHES (CONTINUED)

Also... Loaves & Fishes :To get more involved, find out about volunteer opportunities on-line at: [http://www.loavesandfishesco.org / donatevolunteer.html](http://www.loavesandfishesco.org/donatevolunteer.html).

Monetary donations may be made through the above website or mailed to: Loaves & Fishes
PO Box 967
Idaho Springs, CO 80452-0967/

Loaves & Fishes is a non-profit ministry of the churches here in Clear Creek County. They provide food and other forms of assistance to those in need

DID YOU KNOW

An easy way to support Loaves and Fishes Did you know you can buy a Safeway "gift card" from Loaves and Fishes?

It's pretty easy to use.

You just keep track of the value of the groceries in your cart. When you get to the check-out you ask the cashier to load that amount onto your gift card And then use the card to pay for your groceries. That way Loaves and Fishes gets a small percentage of the cost of your groceries. It's a small amount, but we all buy groceries and together we can make a nice contribution to help feed our friends and neighbors. Talk to Pam Thomas if you want to learn more about it..

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This year we have expanded our mission. Homeless Is a major concerned in our county. Many of our shoppers live in the woods. (We even delivered to a man Living in a cave) Some are caught in the vicious cycle Of living in cheap motels, never able to save enough to pay a deposit and first months rent on a home. People need to have a home before they can secure a job. We would like to help them. We have set up a \$5000 Relief Fund (we would like to make it more to help with temporary housing, rents, & deposits and relocations to less expensive venues or reuniting folks with family. Obviously, we appreciate anything you can contribute. We sincerely thank you for any support you give. Loaves & Fishes

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