



Zionews

Special December 2020 Edition

The Waiting Will End

As a member of Generation X, I grew up watching The Smurfs. This cartoon about a community of blue humanoids three apples high is a fond memory of mine. In this time, I am reminded of one particular running gag they developed over the run of the show.

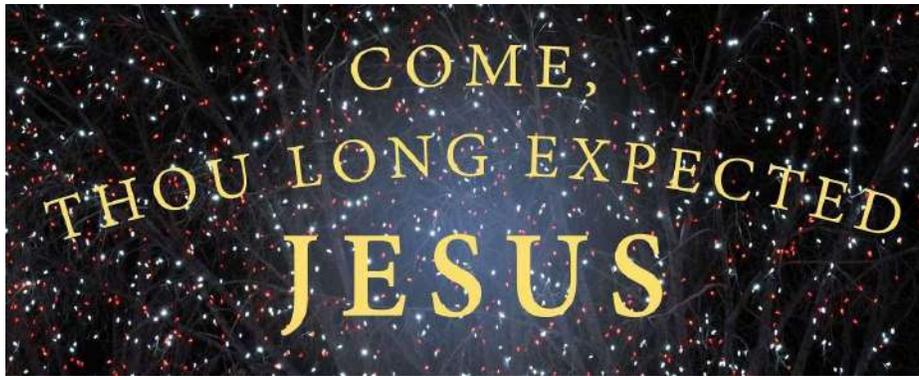


Image by Dave Alvarez, Source: <https://www.deviantart.com/davealvarez/art/Smurf-Running-Gag-416675977>

It always involved going somewhere far away--and when your legs are on a body that's only three apples high, a lot of places are far away. But when the Smurfs had to go especially far away, one of the Smurfs would ask, "Is it much farther, Papa Smurf?" And Papa Smurf would reply, "Not much further now." This would happen three times, but after the third time, Papa Smurf would reply, with much aggravation, "YES, IT IS!"

I find myself asking God the question of how much longer we have to wait for this state of emergency to end, how much longer do we have to wait before things get back to something like what they were, how much longer do we have to wait for a vaccine. I have not been given any particular date, but every time I ask, the Spirit reminds me of God's promise, "The waiting will end."

God's people are always waiting. Noah and his family waited for the flood waters to recede. Abraham and Sarah waited for a child. The younger generations of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness waited to enter the promised land. The poor, sick, and widows of the settled lands of Judah and Israel waited for justice. The Jews in exile waited for their homecoming. The Jews of both First Centuries waited for the coming Messiah. The disciples waited--and still wait--for Jesus to return. And in every case, God promised that their faithful waiting would be worth it.



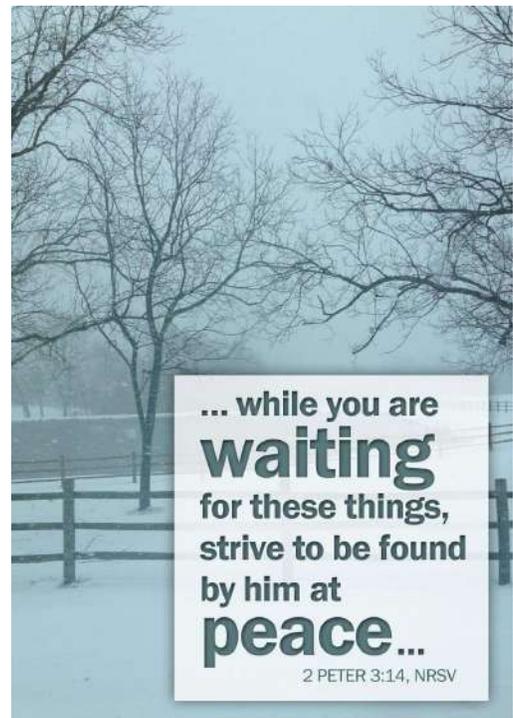
I do not know how much farther it is. I do know the hope that we have in vaccines, but I also know that we will have distribution challenges. I do know the hope that we have in returning to normal, but I also know the deadly consequences if we return to normal too soon. I do know the hope we have that this state of emergency will end, but I also know that the legal definition of a state of emergency makes some necessary things possible in this time.

I do not know how much farther it is. I do know the hope that we have in Jesus' return, but I also know that we cannot wait to proclaim that hope through our actions and words. I do know the hope that we have in the forgiveness of sins, but I also know that we cannot keep that forgiveness to ourselves. I do know the hope we have in celebrating Jesus' birth, but I know it will have to look different this year.

The waiting will end. God keeps promises. The Messiah has come, and will come again. We will be able to gather together again. We will be able to sing together again. We will be able to receive communion at the same table again.

Not much father now. The Spirit will keep us faithful.

May God bless our time of waiting with hope as we look for a glimpse of God's promises fulfilled-- as God always does.



Merry Christmas, Pastor Eric



*The 11:00 pm Christmas Eve service
will be broadcast live on*

WLEC AM 1450

WLEC FM 93.5



Nickles & Noses



As a reminder, these numbers are two months behind to account for the audit and bookkeeping schedule.

Your continued faithful support of Zion's ministries in this time is awe inspiring! This is why we have over \$40,000 in operating savings from previous years and are working toward a surplus again this year! You are amazing!

October Offerings

	Monthly	Year to Date
Actual	\$38,418.18	\$337,939.96
Budget	\$35,417.00	\$354,170.00

October Total Income

	Monthly	Year to Date
Actual	\$39,353.02	\$408,703.45
Budget	\$38,098.00	\$380,986.00

October Attendance

	Total	Average
Saturday Reflection	206	41
8:45 Service of the Table	27	7
Sunday Worship	808	202
Total	1041	238

There were five Saturday Reflections and four Sunday Worship services in October. We also had two 8:45 Services of the Table. At the time of writing--which includes some November weekends--our average weekly attendance is 286 at this point in the year. Our average weekly attendance last year was 213. That's not a typo. Using the suggested calculation for the actual number of people watching our services on YouTube being twice the number of unique views, our average attendance has gone up by over 70!



Carolyn's Corner . . .

Advent . . . What is it? Why do we Lutheran Christians observe it?

Advent is the four weeks leading up to Christmas and is a time to prepare ourselves for the celebration of Jesus' birth. It's a time for us to look forward to and anticipate the celebration of Christmas; to prepare our hearts and our lives to receive this Baby that God is sending into our world. During these four weeks we focus on hope, peace, joy, and love - the other gifts God is sending to us so that we can make our world a better place. Along with the Old Testament Israelites, we wait for his coming.

Old Testament prophets looked forward to the time God would send a king who would bring forever peace to God's people. They waited a very long time and when that baby King was born, God sent angels to announce his birth; at long last the fulfillment of God's promise.



Advent is only four weeks long, but for us it symbolizes the wait, the anticipation, the hope of this miraculous birth. As we look back at and celebrate this Christmas birth that took place over 2,000 years ago, we also look forward to Christ's second coming.

This year our Christmas celebrations may be different, but the important part of Christmas will never change; the celebration of the birth of Jesus, our Savior.

May you and your loved ones have a blessed and peaceful Christmas celebration!

Blessings,

Carolyn



The Christmas Story Retold

The Children's Christmas program will be Sunday, December 20, during worship and it will be virtual!

Just go to *The Hill of Zion* YouTube at 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

You will also be able to tune in to the usual broadcast on WLEC 1450 AM & 93.5 FM.





Special Church Office Hours During the Holidays

December 24th and 25th – The Office is Closed
December 31st and January 1st – The Office is Closed

Merry Christmas!

From Pastor Eric, Deacon Carolyn, & Lori Wolser

Christmas Hams

2020 is indeed a unique year (I hope!), and the distribution of the annual Christmas hams will be done differently this year as well. With the closing of Care and Share, we have enlisted the help of OHgo for the distribution of the hams.

We will purchase the hams as usual from GFS, and we will cut the hams into approximately 3 pound pieces for distribution. OHgo will then pick up the hams and distribute them to the community in at least 2 distributions, one of which will be in the parking lots of one of the senior “high rises” downtown. OHgo will also take responsibility for advertising the distributions. The distributions will take place on Dec. 17, Dec. 21 and/or Dec. 22.



We hope to raise a minimum of \$6,000.00 for the purchase of the hams. If we raise more we will buy more hams or other substitutes. Last year, we distributed approximately 900 hams to the community. The Zion Foundation has always donated a portion of the sum. Please consider individually contributing to this project. Contact Gary Ferber by separate email (GFerber@flynnpykruse.com) to donate. Thank you!!

To my Zion family:

Thank you for the many well wishes and prayers, on social media, in phone calls, on fences and in song, and the many birthday and get well cards. You warm my heart, lift my spirits and show we truly are God's family.

**Blessings to you all,
Marj Burton**



The Christmas season is a time to remember all that we are thankful for, and you are one of them.
Thank you for being such a wonderful person.



Zion's Christmas Plan



It is with a heavy heart that Zion's Worship & Music Ministry Team along with Zion's Council have decided that because of the ongoing state of emergency we will not have our regular schedule of worship this year for our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services. We are all disappointed by this, but want to make it possible for some kind of gathering at Zion to celebrate the birth of Christ in addition to broadcast and streamed services.

There will be one Christmas service on our YouTube channel which will post in the afternoon of December 24th. This will be the service for both Christmas Eve and Christmas Day so you can worship at home as it works in your schedule. We will also broadcast a recording of the service on WLEC at 11 p.m. on Christmas Eve.

If we get back to Level 2 or get to Level 1, there will also be times available for people to come in and have some time in Zion for Christmas. December 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 28th, 29th, 30th, and 31st will be days when households, families, or pandemic bubble groups can come to Zion for a Christmas Sanctuary Time. Please call and schedule your time with the office.

The time slots for each day of Christmas Sanctuary Time are 9 a.m., 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 3 p.m. You will have the space for up to thirty minutes. There will be an approximately twenty minute program that plays on the screens during these time slots with Christmas music playing at other times. The worship space and Gathering Room will all be decorated for Christmas with some additional props so you can still get your annual Christmas at Zion pictures. The space will be cleaned after each time slot.

If we are at Level 3 or Level 4, there will not be any Christmas Sanctuary Times. But we will have a special Christmas display in the portico so you can drive through to see the display and get some pictures. This display will be up regardless of which Level we are in.



Capital Campaign Update

The external work for the capital campaign is almost done! The warmer than normal weeks in October and November means only a few projects are yet to be done. The louvers to complete the south face are on order and will arrive in 2021. The landscaping will be done in the spring. And that's it!

The next phase will be the basement, and some decisions are still being made there. With any luck, we'll have the renovations to the basement complete by Easter!

On the fundraising side, we are just \$30,000 from reaching our goal! As you look at your end of year giving, please consider some extra support for the capital campaign to help up reach out goal.

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church Council Meeting
November 11, 2020 – 7:00 p.m. via ZOOM

CALL TO ORDER:

President, Martha Thompson called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Rev. Bodenstab, Deacon Carolyn Steinfeldt, Carol Albert, Andrew Castello, Savannah Casello, Faye Gast, Tom Kinsel, Darlene Lowery, Barbara Newton, Nancy Stewart, Martha Thompson, Jarrod Todi, Kevin Yontz, and Recording Secretary, Lori Wobser.

OPENING DEVOTION & PRAYER:

Pastor Eric opened with a reading from Hebrews 12:1-12 and prayer.

AGENDA:

Agenda approved.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes for the October 14, 2020 Council meeting were approved as presented.

CLERGY REPORTS:

Pastor Eric – Written report submitted. A recommendation regarding Drive Through Communion Distribution during cold weather was made and discussed. During colder months, there will only be one lane with two rotating teams to serve. This allows one team to warm themselves while one serves. The distribution has been steady at approximately 60 served. Thank you to our dedicated Drive Through Volunteers.

Deacon Carolyn – Written report submitted.

OFFICER REPORTS:

Martha Thompson, President – Verbal report. Very pleased that the Congregational Meeting went well.

Vice President – No report given.

Secretary/Treasurer, Tom Kinsel – Financial reports were submitted and discussed.

MINISTRY TEAMS REPORTS:

Worship & Music – Carol Albert – The Worship & Music Planning Team met on November 11th. All Saints visitation time in the sanctuary went well. Plans are being made for Christmas meditation times for support units (family/close friend). Members can reserve a time to sit with their support unit in the sanctuary and listen to music and meditations of the season. These plans will be presented for Level 1 or 2 only. Christmas Eve hymns were selected. The YouTube release for the Christmas Eve service will be Dec. 24th at Noon. There will be no in person services for Christmas Eve/Christmas. Planning for Advent meditations. Pastor Eric will be

checking with WLEC to see if he can drop off a thumb drive that would have the 11:00 pm Christmas Eve service for the radio.

Faith Formation – Jarrod Todi - Verbal report – The Children’s Christmas Program is scheduled for Sunday, December 20th. Plans continue to evolve for the program.

Stewardship & Administration – Andrew Castello – Nothing to report.

Youth & Young Adult – Kevin Yontz and Savannah Castello – Nothing to report.

Parish Life – Darlene Lowery – Nothing to report.

Mission & Outreach – Nancy Stewart – Verbal report on Thanksgiving Dinner planning. Zion’s committee is comprised of Gary Ferber, Deacon Carolyn, Lori Wobser, Diane Ernst, and Nancy Stewart. Zion will be prepping, cooking, and delivering turkeys to Holy Angels. Need help in office for incoming calls scheduling deliveries. Final meeting will be Nov. 17th. Drivers for delivery are needed.

Property & Facilities – Barbara Newton – Written report was submitted. Roger and Barb Newton are looking into options for the old buffers in the basement. Darlene Bibler is doing a wonderful job as custodian. Kevin Yontz to look at railings for attic.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Nominating Committee:** A motion was made to approve Alan Mitchell, Pat Cassidy, and Hope Bailey as the nominees for the Nominating Committee of 2021. Motion carried.
- **Phone System:** New phone system to be installed on November 12th. This will be a savings of approximately \$115 per month. It will also give the staff the ability to move about the building and still answer the church phone via their cell phones.
- **Capital Campaign:** Basement renovation. Discussion regarding flooring choice of carpet squares. Capital Campaign Committee is waiting until there is a final total on the exterior work before making decisions regarding the renovations in the basement.
- **Bishop:** Executive Committee met with the Bishop and Sherry Krieger from the Synod office regarding the possibility of a call for a second Deacon position. There is a need to evaluate how this will work for Zion. If it is determined that we need a second Deacon, then we will proceed according to the Constitution and Synod bylaws. Per Synod recommendation, two committees will be formed. The first committee determines the duties of the Pastor and Deacon and determines our ministerial needs. The second committee, under the guidance of the Synod, will evaluate the candidates presented by the Synod.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Outreach:** Discussion on how we as a congregation can reach out to one another.

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m. with The Lord’s Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori A. Wobser, Recording Secretary

Phases of Zion Re-Opening

The phases of reopening have been developed in accordance with CDC guidelines and from the ELCA's Considerations for Returning to In-Person Worship.

Our aim is to keep the Family of Zion safe and healthy as we begin this road to reopen.

Level 1 (Yellow)

- Each Saturday: YouTube Reflection at 6:00 pm
- Each Sunday:
 - 8:00 am YouTube/FB Service
 - 8:45 am Service of the Table (limited seating – 45)
 - 9:30 am Zoom Fellowship Time and Children of Zion on YouTube/FB
 - 10:30 am Worship Service on WLEC/YouTube/FB
 - 11:30 am Drive-Through Distribution
 - Limited Visits by Appointment Only this includes Prayer Time in the Worship Space
 - Meetings of less than 30 people that are 30 minutes or less

Level 2 (Orange)

- Each Saturday: YouTube Reflection at 6:00 pm
- Each Sunday:
 - 8:00 am YouTube/FB Service
 - 8:45 am Service of the Table (limited seating – 45)
 - 9:30 am Zoom Fellowship Time and Children of Zion on YouTube/FB
 - 10:30 am Worship Service on WLEC/YouTube/FB
 - 11:30 am Drive-Through Distribution
 - Limited Visits by Appointment Only this includes Prayer Time in the Worship Space
 - No Non-Staff Building Use.

Level 3 and 4 (Red and Purple)

- Each Saturday: YouTube Reflection at 6:00 pm
- Each Sunday:
 - 8:00 am YouTube/FB Service
 - 9:30 am Zoom Fellowship Time and Children of Zion on YouTube/FB
 - 10:30 am Worship Service on WLEC/YouTube/FB
 - No Non-Staff Building Use.

December 2020

All meetings are via Zoom during Levels 1 and 2.



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 10:00 am YouTube channel class on Augsburg Confession	2 Poinsettia Deadline 9:30 am Staff Meeting—Zoom 6:30 pm Confirmation—Zoom	3 9:30 am Priscilla—Zoom 10:00 am YouTube channel class on Augsburg Confession	4 	5 6:00 pm Reflection
6 8:00 am Youtube/FB Worship Service 9:30 am Fellowship Time—Zoom 9:30 am Sunday School - Youtube/FB 10:30 am Worship on WLEC/Youtube/FB	7 4:00 pm Foundation	8 10:00 am YouTube channel class on Augsburg Confession	9 Christmas Memorial Deadline 9:30 am Staff Meeting—Zoom 7:00 pm Council 	10 10:00 am YouTube channel class on Augsburg Confession	11	12 6:00 pm Reflection
13 8:00 am Youtube/FB Worship Service 9:30 am Fellowship Time—Zoom 9:30 am Sunday School - Youtube/FB 10:30 am Worship on WLEC/Youtube/FB	14 10:30 am Praying in Color—Zoom	15 10:00 am YouTube channel class on Augsburg Confession	16 9:30 am Staff Meeting—Zoom 6:30 pm Confirmation—Zoom	17 9:30 am Women's Bible Study—Zoom 10:00 am YouTube channel class on Augsburg Confession	18	19 6:00 pm Reflection
20 Children's Christmas Program 8:00 am Youtube/FB Worship Service 9:30 am Fellowship Time—Zoom 9:30 am Sunday School - Youtube/FB 10:30 am Worship on WLEC/Youtube/FB	21 	22 10:00 am YouTube channel class on Augsburg Confession 	23 9:30 am Staff Meeting—Zoom	24 OFFICE CLOSED 10:00 am YouTube channel class on Augsburg Confession 12:00 pm Christmas Service on YouTube/FB 11:00 pm Christmas Service on WLEC	25 OFFICE CLOSED 	26 6:00 pm Reflection
27 8:00 am Youtube/FB Worship Service 9:30 am Fellowship Time—Zoom 9:30 am Sunday School - Youtube/FB 10:30 am Worship on WLEC/Youtube/FB	28 10:30 am Praying in Color—Zoom 5:00 pm Property & Facilities Mtg.	29 10:00 am YouTube channel class on Augsburg Confession 	30 9:30 am Staff Meeting—Zoom NO Confirmation	31 OFFICE CLOSED 10:00 am YouTube channel class on Augsburg Confession	 	