



O LORD, our Sovereign, How majestic is your name in all the earth! You Have set your glory above the heavens. Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger. When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea and whatever passes along the paths of the seas. O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! –Psalm 8

New Year's resolutions are awful. And not just because we inevitably fail to keep them. But there is something more deeply flawed about the whole idea: it relies on an unhealthy myth of progress. I'm pretty sure Nadia Bolz-Weber tweets the same thing about this every New Year. She says: "no one has ever become their ideal self. After all those resolutions and elimination diets and strivings. It's always a moving target. Your ideal self doesn't exist. YOU do. Your actual, lumpy, shimmering, inconsistent self is the one that is loved and needed here." See, the central flaw in making New Year's resolutions is that, by setting our sights on a moving target of self improvement, we miss out on the actual, strikingly important, *us* as we are. And at this point you might ask with the psalmist, but who am I that anyone should care about me? Who are lumpy inconsistent mortals that God should favor them? Yet God *does* favor us. And that is what makes all the difference this New Year. The psalmist says: it is out of the mouths of babes, that God establishes a bulwark. Babes aren't powerful, paragons of ideal self-hood, or good at keeping resolutions, and they certainly have the most in life that they can improve upon. I mean, what can they do but eat, sleep and poop? And in my experience they cannot even do those three simple things without help most of the time. But it is precisely weak babes, like the baby Christ, that are the tools that God uses to establish the strongest defense against the darkness. So if God can make bulwarks out of the babbling from an infants mouth, who are you mortal, to say that you are not important? That you have to be better than you are? We aren't just setting ourselves up for failure when we make New Year's resolutions, we are creating a cycle of violence against ourselves! Even if you manage to keep your New Year's resolution, all it means is you have successfully waged war against yourself for a whole year. You have, through violence against your own sins, hurt yourself until you become a shell of who you were before, all in the name of progress. Is clawing tooth and nail against our very self-hood actually a good thing to practice? What do we actually gain from learning to hurt ourselves until we achieve some measly step forward? How much of you will remain after you find you have to take another step after this one? And another after that? So much violence at your own hand you will have to endure for so little gain. And worse, if you fail at keeping your resolution, as I always do, you are likely to do even more violence to yourself in your shame at not meeting your unrealistic

standards for yourself. There is no way to win with resolutions! By making them, you are setting bulwarks against yourself. Because in doing so we de-value what God our Sovereign has made holy. YOU! Stinking YOU! That's who God favors. Not someone better than you, or more successful. But baby you. Believe it or not, even in comparison to the stars and moon, that's who God loves. So this New Year, be it resolved that we do not make any resolutions. Instead, let us practice something better than violence against ourselves. Let us practice that forgiveness that God has shown us. Let us practice love for ourselves and one another, despite (and to spite!) any room for improvement. And even when we fail at practicing those things (because we will), let us take comfort in the knowledge that we are not the Sovereign, we do not have to be perfect. But God, whose name is majestic in all the Earth, loved us even when we were lumpy and gross. And that same God is at work making us new again every day.

Amen.

Pastor Tommy

The Work of the Church - 2022

Very soon, Zion's Nominating Committee will begin the important work of putting together lists of people willing to serve in elected roles. These roles include the Audit Committee, Congregation Council, Nominating Committee, and Synod Assembly Representatives, as well as Delta Conference Representatives. At Zion's Annual Meeting on February 14, 2021 members will review and elect members to fill these positions. Following is a brief re-cap of the roles and responsibilities of our elected positions:

Audit Committee: Audit Committee members are elected by the Congregation Council to a three-year-term. Individuals who serve on this committee provide an independent evaluation of the financial records of Zion and provide an opinion as to its financial statements. The Audit Committee also recommends improvements as to internal controls of the congregation.

Congregation Council: Congregation Council members are elected to a three-year-term and may serve a second consecutive full term. Council members have general oversight of the life and activities of Zion, and in particular, its worship life. Congregation Council members are also responsible for the financial and property matters of the congregation. The Council normally meets monthly on the third Tuesday at 6:00 p.m., and members are asked to serve on at least one standing committee (Christian Education and Youth; Evangelism and Membership; Finance and Stewardship; Personnel; Property; Worship and Music).

Nominating Committee: Six Zion members are elected to a one year term (two of whom, preferably, are outgoing members of the Congregation Council). The committee meets in the weeks prior to the Annual Meeting to identify nominees for open elected roles. They do this with the pastor and president of the congregation council who may be aware of potential candidates. Once the slots are filled as fully as possible, the report is included in the Annual Report and used as the basis for elections. The committee members are: John Barry, Brenda Fleck, Julie Gauthier, Karen LaFoilie, Liz Macklem and Larry Peterson.

Synod Assembly Reps: Each year, two persons are elected to attend the Northern Great Lakes Synod Annual Assembly. In 2021, the assembly will be virtual. Zion Reps will gather with representatives from 80 other churches, as well as their pastors, to vote on issues affecting the synod and to learn and come away inspired through worship and workshops.

Delta Conference # 6 Reps: We are able to elect four persons as conference representatives. Zion is the newest church in the Delta Conference and joins nine others, from: Escanaba (3), Gladstone, Perkins, Rapid River, Rock, Stonington, and Trenary. The next conference meeting to be announced, and we also anticipate another Walking Together Event in October 2021.



All committee chairpersons are reminded to turn in their annual reports to the church office by the week of January 16th and earlier if possible. Please submit the reports in Microsoft Word format if possible. These reports are reviewed by our auditors before they are ready to be copied and assembled. The annual reports will be ready for your pick up February 5 & 6. The annual meeting will on Zoom, February 13th following worship at 11:00am.

Reports are needed from the following committees:

Ahlstrom Trust Fund

Audit Committee

Endowment Fund

Funeral Luncheon Committee

Quilters

Tanzania Church Committee

Thrivent

Sunday School/Christian Education Committee

Property Committee

Finance & Stewardship Committee

**Personnel Committee
Evangelism & Membership Committee
Worship & Music Committee**

Join us for Bible Study

The Monday night Bible study group will be and 4th Mondays starting January 11th . Pr. study on the Gospel of John. We will meet in person in Augustana Hall. Be sure to wear your mask and social distance. If you have any questions about this opportunity for study, please contact the office.



meeting at 6:30, every 2nd
Richter will be leading our



The family of Melvin Rullman who passed away on October 24, 2021. Melvin and wife Judy were "summer members" for many years and to the Family of Marijene Swanson who passed away on November 23, 2021.

Dear Linda and Members of Zion,
What a wonderful surprise to receive the angel ornament. I was truly touched. Your kind words were also a real blessing. Mel made Zion his church home while he was building and the two of us have been happy to worship and be "summer" members. You will always be in my heart and I pray God's blessings on Zion for the coming years.
Fondly,
Judy

Dear Friends at Zion,
I want to thank you for sending me the monthly Beacon and copies of the weekly service including the Pastors sermon. I am so fortunate to have such a caring congregation. I wish I could be with you all, but I think of you every day.
God Bless.

With all my love,
Betty DeSautel

BAPTISMS

On January 9, 2022 we will add three new members to Zion through their Holy Baptism. **Grayson Paradise** child of Hannah Golden and **Kyah and Jameson Snyder** children of Jessica Lynts.

WELCOME!



NEWS FROM ZION QUILTERS

Thrivent helps support Zion Lutheran Quilting Program

In recent months, several members of Zion Lutheran's quilting program each applied for Team Action seed money from Thrivent Financial. They were Karen Klaus, Lila Panek, Dorothy Brandstrom, Karen LaFoille and Bonnie Groh. Other members of Zion have written team action grants in previous years also and we thank them for their efforts. Thrivent approved each of the five applications this year and the Zion Lutheran Quilting Program was granted a total of \$1,250.00 to purchase fabric, batting and other needed supplies. We wish to **thank Thrivent** for giving the much-needed funds in order to continue to make functional and beautiful quilts. The quilts are shipped all over the world to those who are in great need.

Sister Quilting Programs Meet Together

On October 11, 2021, quilting ladies from First Lutheran Church in Gladstone, made a visit to Zion Lutheran Church. Those who made the trip to Zion were Dollie Salmi, Connie Salmi, Vicki Caswell, Kathy Natchway, and Sherri Makaowski. In return, Kaye Jarski, Gloria McGuire, Carla Flodin, Mary Ansell, and Bonnie Groh visited First Lutheran quilting program on November 11, 2021. It was an enjoyable time for all of those involved! The time spent together was very memorable, with the sharing of ideas and having fellowship together with our dear friends.

***Please note:**

If you would like to donate new or gently used fabric to the quilting program, there is a tote located in the Fellowship Hall under one of the long benches and is clearly marked for this purpose. Thank you in advance for your help and support.

If you would like to join the Quilters, we meet each Monday, September through May in the Fellowship Hall at 9:15am. We would love to have you share in this mission. It is a great way to start out the week making quilts for those who really need them.

If you have questions, please contact one of the quilting ladies or Co-leaders, Mary Ansell at 906.644.2851 or Kaye Jarski at 906.286.3167.

Circle News

The Circles are continuing their monthly meetings. If you are not a member of a circle and would be interested in joining one, please contact any one of the following ladies for more information:

Sarah Circle—Liz Macklem

Joy Circle—Bonnie Groh

Hope Circle—Sheila Clark

The **Sarah Circle** meets on Mondays at 1:00pm

The **Joy Circle** meets on the second Thursday at 10:00am.

The **Hope Circle** meets on the third Thursday at 6:00pm.

Be sure to check with your Circle Leader to find out if and where your circle will be meeting.

Upcoming Scripture Readings

January 2 —2nd Sunday of Christmas

Jeremiah 31:7-14, Psalm 147:12-20, Ephesians 1:3-14,

John 1:[1-9], 10-18

January 9—Baptism of Our Lord

Isaiah 43:1-7, Psalm 29, Acts 8:14-17, Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

January 16—Second Sunday After Epiphany

Isaiah 62:1-5, Psalm 36:5-10, 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, John 2:1-11

January 23—Third Sunday After Epiphany

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10, Psalm 19, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

Luke 4:14-21

January 30—Fourth Sunday After Epiphany

Jeremiah 1:4-10, Psalm 71:1-6, 1 Corinthians 13:1-13,

Luke 4:21-30

Those Who Serve In January

Readers: 1/2 Ruth Jones

1/9 Donna Mott

1/16 Bonnie Moody

1/23 Rebecca Peterson

1/30 Anne Stromgren

Usher Jo-Nell Berger & Janet Krueger

Altar Flowers: January 23-Mike & Kaye Jarski

January 30-Pat Mikelson

Bulletin, Bread and Wine:

January 2 - David and Gloria McGuire

January 9 –

January 16 –

January 23 –

January 30 -

Church Attendance Report

	Saturday	Sunday	Zoom
November 6/7 2021	22	41	8
November 13/14 2021	19	28	9
November 20/21 2021	16	26	9
November 27/28 2021	13	29	13
December 4/5	16	28	8
December 11/12	Snowstorm	23	14

December 18/19	12	45	9
December 24	4:00 57		
	6:00 31		
	7:30 31		10
December 25	9		
December 26		17	9



“For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.” ~Romans 8:24-25

Dear Northern Great Lakes Synod,

You have no doubt noticed the increasing darkness. The kids go to school in the dark, and soon, the school day will end as it began, in darkness. The hours of light are getting shorter and shorter, and people are grateful for lingering twilight. How ironic that the most hopeful season of the church year begins as the darkness increases. In the weeks to come, we light candles on the Advent wreath, and it's not a moment too soon. These lights of hope stand against the growing darkness. And every week, as we add the flame of another candle, the light will increase and shine brighter even as the darkness comes sooner and lasts longer. In this season of Hope, and as this year of Hope 2021 comes to its end, I share with you some things that I do see that give me hope: **1.** Our congregations continue to find new creative ways to do ministry. As I read through your newsletters, whether online or hard copy, I am impressed and encouraged by your continued efforts. Sure, some things have paused. Yes, some priorities have been re-evaluated and energies placed in new directions. Yet, this is all good as we continue to be church together and church for the sake of the world. I am grateful to the Spirit that is at work among and through us as the work of Christ continues.

2. We have wonderful pastoral leaders! In the past few years, we have welcomed many new pastors and they bring new energy, perspective, and ideas. And our seasoned pastors and Licensed Lay Ministers have provided stability and the blessing of trusted relationships that keep congregational partnerships in motion and help reduce anxiety. And congregations in pastoral transition have been patient and involved, waiting for God's timing with hope.

3. We have renewed joy in being together again...safely. As pandemic restrictions have eased, Pastor Jim and I are once again happy to gather with you for worship. I do not mind wearing a mask if it means we can sing together and gather in the same space. I love hearing the voices of others raised in song and prayer. It has felt like salve on a wound to share the peace, sing alto to someone's soprano, and hear combined voices pray the Lord's prayer together in the rhythm and cadence of voices in unison. While I truly believe that some sense of community can be achieved and appreciated through Zoom, YouTube, and Facebook live, the joy and value of the community gathered in person is also true and real.

4. Our synod is newly connected through Lifelong Faith Formation, Pastoral Leader Check-Ins, and various Zoom meetings. While I have missed being able to add lunch and snacks to in-person Synod meetings, in many ways we are more connected as a synod than we have ever been. Teachers and students from the Copper Country to Marinette, from Ironwood to Sault Ste. Marie gather in virtual classrooms and discussion groups. We are church together in a whole new way, gathering to discuss and wrestle with conversations about issues of race, scriptural interpretation, and to consider and plan various ministry efforts.

5. God is at work! In all our efforts, in all our re-evaluations, in all the changes and future uncertainty, the Spirit of the living Christ is gathering, inspiring, supporting, and guiding. We are discovering again what it means to be church, what the purpose of the Body of Christ is in this world, and who we are in mission together. I see a new hunger for deeper spirituality and for meaningful connectedness to God and each other. I see ministry efforts taking on a life of their own. I see details and pieces falling together. I see a willingness to experiment, to try new things, to jump even when the landing is unclear. There is much to be hopeful for because of what we can see even as we continue to hope for that which is still becoming. As Advent candles are lit, as the glow from the manger bed grows brighter, as we strain to hear the songs of angels, remember that you are not alone. In hopeful anticipation of Christmas and a blessed New Year, I believe it is not too soon to share the following verse from "It Came upon the Midnight Clear" that speaks anew to our present circumstances: And you, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low, who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow: look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing; Oh, rest beside the weary road and hear the angels sing!

Yours in Christ,

Bishop Katherine Finegan

FROM THE NORTHERN GREAT LAKES SYNOD

Lifelong Faith Formation

Registration Deadline Coming Up Soon

The registration deadline for the new schedule of Lifelong Faith Formation classes is **5 pm ET on Friday, January 7**. For more information and to sign up for one or more of these diverse offerings, visit the Northern Great Lakes Synod [website](#).

Upcoming classes include:

Introduction to Biblical Hebrew

Sunday evenings with Pastor Nicole Hanson Lynn.

The Samuel Series: Prayer and the Spiritual Life

Monday mornings, facilitated by Barb Ojibway, Pastor Lee Goodwin, and Pastor Jon Magnuson.

The Big Picture Bible Discussion

Tuesday evenings, coordinated by Susan Anderson and Jeff Henquinet.

Anishinaabe Culture

Up to three evening sessions beginning on Thursday, January 27, coordinated by Denise Cadeau, Dean of Anishinaabe Studies at Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College.

Ezekiel Bible Study

Wednesday evenings with Pastor Tommy Richter (this second class in the series will cover chapters 25-48).

Dialogue with the Islamic Resource Group

Coordinated by Pastor Christina Forsythe, on two evenings, Thursday, January 20 and Friday, January 21.

Planning Ahead 2022 Synod Assembly at Finlandia University Friday and Saturday May 13 & 14. Worship will be live-streamed and links to view the business meeting will be available on our website and Facebook page. However **voting members will be required to be physically present to vote** during the business portions of the assembly.

Annual Report Letter to Congregations From Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp

Greetings from Fortune Lake!

December 6, 2021 Greetings from Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp in the Name of Christ, in whose mission we all share. We thank God for your partnership in ministry and offer prayers on your behalf. 2021 was an exciting year at Fortune Lake! While still in the midst of a pandemic, we were able to offer safe, meaningful, memorable outdoor ministry experiences in this Place of Grace. Summer brought 397 onsite campers. Although this was a significant decrease from our 2019 camper total of 553, we had instituted a half-capacity limit for our cabins and tree houses and reduced the duration of our summer, so achieving this number was no small feat! 27 seasonal staff members shared the gospel through our theme of “From Generation to Generation” based on Psalm 100:5. Thanks be to God, we remained Covid free all summer long! Charlotte Strom transitioned from her position as Camp Intern into the new role of Guest Services Coordinator. Charlotte works full-time to ensure that all guests of our property are well informed before their stay, receive a warm welcome, and have what they need to be comfortable while at Fortune Lake. Under Charlotte’s leadership, we had a strong Fall with the return of our Wellness Retreat and lots of rental groups of all sizes and types. Please keep Fortune Lake in the front of your minds as you consider gatherings for your youth, your church council, and even your friend and family groups! As we head into the winter months, please be mindful of our youth and intergenerational retreats. We waited until the Covid-19 vaccination was available for ages 5-12 before hosting overnight events for this age group. Throughout January and February 2022, we’ll be hosting the Winter Wonderland, Jr./Sr. High, Young Adult, and Youth (for grades 3-6) Retreats. Please make plans to join us! Due to the profound generosity of our donors, the reception of two Payroll Protection Program loans, as well as careful stewardship, Fortune Lake is in the strongest financial position we’ve been in in recent memory. All bills are paid, property upgrades are ongoing, we have established a rainy day fund, we have no debt, and we continue to strive to treat our employees justly. In the coming months, we hope to have some exciting news to share about a large matching gift program that we’re pursuing for the end of 2022. In the meantime, we thank you for your financial support – both as congregations and individuals – for our ongoing ministry needs. You make this important work possible! May God continue to bless this ministry that we share! Grace & Peace,
Amanda Rasner, Camp Director

Fortune Lake Upcoming Events

Senior Day, January 10: Emphasizes staying healthy as we age.

Winter Wonderland Retreat (all ages) January 14-16/17

Disconnect to Reconnect: Jr/Sr High Retreat (grades 7-12) February 4-5. An opportunity for kids to have some intentional time away from their phones to reconnect with the Word of God and other people.

Nurturing Wholeness: Young Adult Retreat (ages 18-26) February 11-13

Building on Faith: Youth Retreat (grades 3-6)
February 25-26.

For more information on these events, please check the Fortune Lake website.

Biblical resolutions

Hold firmly to your faith (Hebrews 4:14)

Assemble with the saints (Hebrews 10:25)

Pray and thank God earnestly (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18)

Petition God for great blessings (Malachi 3:10)

Yield not to temptation (1 Thessalonians 5:22)

Notice opportunities to serve others (Galatians 6:10)

Examine yourself daily (2 Corinthians 13:5)

Work diligently for the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Yearn for righteousness (Matthew 5:6)

Exercise godliness (1 Timothy 4:7)

Aim for sinless perfection (Hebrews 6:1)

Redeem the time, living wisely (Ephesians 5:15-16)

—Gus Nichols (adapted)

“There are far, far better things ahead than any we leave behind.”—C.S. Lewis

“One resolution I have made, and try always to keep, is this: to rise above the little things.”—John Burroughs

“Deep roots are not reached by the frost.”—J.R.R. Tolkien

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Ruth Jones

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A congregation of the Northern Great Lakes Synod
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