



# Zion Lutheran Monthly

## February 2020

### Pastor's Corner

#### The Fervent Love of Christ

“We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.”

Post Communion Prayer  
Lutheran Service Book  
(*underline added*)

We pray the above prayer every Sunday. After we have come together at the altar, after we have received Christ's sacrifice for us, we pray the prayer above. As a pastor, I am always struck by this prayer. Not only do we give thanks to Christ for “*refreshing*” us through the gift of His sacrifice, but as the people of God who have been united together by Christ's sacrifice, we also pray that we would be “*strengthened . . . in fervent love toward one another.*” Who are those “others” the prayer speaks of? They may be your husband or wife sitting next to you; flawed as they may be, they are gifts to you from God who loves you. They may be the parents who are a few feet away who raise you in the faith; an eternal gift. The “others” this prayer speaks about are the members a few pews over you've grown up with, members whom you've maybe even had a few good ole' fashioned church “disagreements” with over the years, and yet they remain cherished family of yours made so not by the blood of birth, but by the blood of Christ.

During the month of February, many in our world celebrate “love.” This “love” is most often defined as romantic love with red hearts, pink cards, and romantic wishes. This is nice, nothing wrong with it. But even the love this secular world offers pales in comparison to the love that Christ has shown to everyone in this world. Just like the prayer above, we Christians are united together with something far greater than what this world peddles as “love.” You are united with one another in the love of Christ; a love shown to you in the crucifixion and handed out to all of us in the Lord's Supper.

As pastor, I love it when we pray this prayer every week. Every week I think of your faces as we pray this: the young faces, the faces with tears, the faces that laugh, the faces that smile, all kinds of people, all kinds of “others”, all united by the love of Christ. May we each remember one another as we pray this prayer every week and truly ask our risen Lord that we may always be “*strengthened . . . in fervent love toward one another.*”

— Pastor Grimenstein

## Mission Moment: Promoting Zion's Internal, local, and international missionary efforts

Fellow Redeemed!

During this season of Christmas, a period when the secular world celebrates its New Year, 2020, join me to give thanks to the Lord for His mercies, in particular for reconciling us to Himself as He took our flesh and became Incarnate to restore us. God the Son inseparably joined Himself to our humanity in Mary's womb. God and man have been brought together in Jesus, "Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!" (LSB 380, stanza 1).



This is a special season of celebration for me. Among other things, this past year, 5 candidates from the LCN mission-field in Africa were granted visas to do graduate work at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW). I thank all who have made this possible: the CTSFW Director of STM studies in concert with the International Students Office and support of the full faculty; the LCMS Office of International Mission; Concordia Catechetical Academy; a very special U.S. Congressman from the State of Wisconsin; and those extremely generous individuals who dug deeply into their own personal pockets to support financially AND showed them hospitality by hosting them during the Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks. May I also use this medium to thank all the individuals who have traveled far and wide, those who joined the Rev'd. Dr. Naomichi Masaki (the Director of STM / PhD studies) to welcome / receive them at the airport in Fort Wayne in the very heart of freezing winter weather, and those who came afterward to see them at the Seminary.

All Glory to the Father be, All Glory to the Son, All Glory, Holy Ghost, to Thee, While endless ages run, Thy thankful people, in particular my Beloved Supporters, praise Thee, Lord, for countless gifts received from You, this past year. And I join with them in praising Thee, Lord, for the countless gifts I too have received from You through them. I pray for Your Grace to keep them and all of their loved ones in Faith, and continue to shower Your blessings on them this New Year of 2020. To Thee I come on my knees, O gracious Lord, the new-born year for You to bless them, Defend them from the evil one, in Your Most Holy Name, I pray. Amen!

I cannot repay, nor LCN repay you, for any of your support, but pray that the Infant Son of Mary, yet Mary's Lord, repay you with good health and a prosperous New Year of 2020, keeping you close to His Manger until eternity! Amen.

Sincerely in Christ,  
Fr. Wokoma.  
I Tim 1:15.

[www.lcms.org/rwokoma](http://www.lcms.org/rwokoma)

# Chairman's Report

Leaping into 2020 !!!

Enjoy your extra day this month! I'm sure there are times when we're busy working, playing or just relaxing that we wish we had more time to get things done or more time just to enjoy what we're doing. Time isn't easily mastered. It's more of an art to use it wisely at...times.

Let me thank everyone for a nice Voter's Meeting last week. It was really nice to see nearly 60 members attending the meeting. Your presence is very much appreciated by our Pastor and all of the various officers and Council members that are working to keep our ministries as vibrant as possible. This has the potential to be a busy year from a Council perspective, so please try to stay tuned to events at your church.

At the February Council meeting, we're going to look at a proposal to remodel the kitchen. If you don't know what the kitchen is like, consider taking a stroll through it soon. It's been decades since anything was done to improve it and it's really much the same as it was when the church was built, more than 50 years ago. If the face-lift proposal is approved by Council, we're going to call a **Special Voter's Meeting on February 23rd following late service** so that you, the membership, can see the proposal and we can begin a fundraising effort to get this work finished within a specific window. The work would be done this summer so it doesn't impact our activities and is finished before the school year begins. Please try to attend this Special Meeting! (lunch will be served and childcare will be provided) We need a quorum. A tremendous amount of effort is going into this project. It is not my policy to be calling numerous Special Meetings, however, when the situations dictate and necessity demands it, I have to call for the meetings to conduct the business of your church in a timely fashion.

Watch for information in the this newsletter, bulletins and eblasts with regard to a light luncheon and presentation by Ron Grimm, LCMS Gift Planning Counselor, who will provide information about Christian stewardship as it applies to LCMS estate planning for your loved ones and favorite ministries. The luncheon and presentation will happen on **Sunday, February 16th after the late service**. Every Lutheran should have a will and think about their estate plan. Ron will work with you in a Christian manner with confidentiality and no pressure. He is an expert who can help you and your family consider customized options that will ensure your desires are executed according to your wishes at the appropriate time. Ron's goal is to assist you as a brother or sister. The presentation is full of information and the wealth of information might be good food for thought.

Finally, the last Wednesday in February is Ash Wednesday. Here comes Lent. Easter is what "we" are all about!!! Easter is Christianity and we own it because HE owns us! Easter is a free gift to us and it's a gift we should share with anyone who might need Easter in their lives. Please try to come to Ash Wednesday service to begin a Lenten season with reflection and humble repentance that leads toward the joyous Saving Grace of Easter. Christ crucified. Resurrected. Saving Grace. Amen.

*Paul Klemash  
Chairman*



**"Is church ever CANCELLED on Sundays because of snow?"**

**God willing . . . NO!**

*Sometimes when things are cancelled you may hear "Zion Lutheran" worship services are cancelled. You may not be aware, but in the Pittsburgh area there are 3 "Zion Lutheran Churches." Always use your discretion when travelling to worship on Sundays, but it is our plan to have worship regardless of the weather!*

- Pastor Grimenstein & Zion's Elders



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*"And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses  
entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." (2 Timothy 2:2)*

December 31, 2019

Rev. Dr. Edward Grimenstein, Pastor  
Mr. Paul Klemash, Chairman, and  
Members of Zion Lutheran Church  
3197 Washington Pike  
Bridgeville, PA 15017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We received a letter from Pastor Grimenstein and Chairman Klemash with the wonderful news about the decision of Zion Lutheran Church to make a five-year pledge to the "Save the Seminary" campaign including the note that the congregation was extremely generous in its support of the first annual offering. I am also pleased to report that the check for \$6,126 has arrived and has been entered into the Save the Seminary account and therefore qualified for a dollar to dollar matching Christmas gift from an anonymous donor. On behalf of all the dedicated folks in the SLMS and our Siberian Lutheran brothers and sisters, please accept our sincere gratitude.

It is hard to believe it has been nearly a year since Zion organized one of the best fundraising mission events we've ever experienced. I wish we could bottle what you have going or send you out to teach other congregations how to do a first-rate event. The welcome and hospitality of the people, the meal, and the great video system to show the movie were wonderful. And then everything climaxed where it should—in the Epiphany Day service in the sanctuary.

Blessed New Year and Epiphany Greetings to you all,  
In Christ,

Rev. Dr. Timothy C. J. Quill  
Director of Seminary Fundraising  
The Siberian Lutheran Mission Society



Lutherans  
For Life

[www.lutheransforlife.org](http://www.lutheransforlife.org)  
888.364.LIFE

## More than Historians

by Michelle Bauman, director of Y4Life

The famous quote, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it,” is often attributed to George Santayana, a professor, philosopher, essayist, and poet who lived during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Throughout his lifetime, Santayana witnessed the devastating effects of WWI, the despair of the Great Depression that followed, and the destruction of his homeland during the Spanish Civil War. Near the end of his life, Santayana decided to move to Italy—just in time to behold the horrors of WWII.

Santayana’s life certainly shaped his opinions on the human condition; he recognized the human tendency toward death and destruction as he repeatedly witnessed the cycle of rebellion, war, and loss in the world. And though he didn’t use theological terms to describe humanity, we can agree with his premise: **Lacking transformation, humanity is doomed.**

What was Santayana’s solution for change? Teach men to be better. Help humans learn from their mistakes. Become historians to prevent our own demise and destruction.

And that, right there, is where our agreement must end.

We know that the problem with humanity can’t be corrected by one more lesson; it can’t be solved by our actions, our resolutions, or our knowledge of the past. The problem with humanity resides in the very bones of our being. It is the pungent pollution that has invaded our lungs, the gangrene that gratifies the flesh, the sin that sucks at the soul. And it’s been with us since the deceiver first cunningly whispered, **“Did God really say ...?”**

What a perfect theme for Lutherans For Life to explore! It hearkens back to that first sin in those first days of life in that first garden, a sin that would create and shape life issues for centuries to come.

Adam and Eve knew God’s command; they had received God’s Law, a gift of love that was meant to protect them, and they knew something horrific—a thing called death—would follow if they took a bite of the forbidden fruit. But they bit anyway. Why? Because they wanted to be like God. Indeed, they wanted to be gods themselves.

Though Adam and Eve were the first to play god, they definitely weren’t the last. The Old Testament is riddled with stories of God’s people trying to wrest control from Him: Cain decides to end Abel’s life, Sarai solves her infertility problems by making Hagar a surrogate, King David steals another man’s wife, and Jonah decides the lives of the Ninevites aren’t worth saving. The list goes on and on.

As responsible historians then, we begin to see a pattern. Failure. Death. Destruction. Sin has corrupted creation; human nature is fallen; we are sinful and unclean.

The testaments depict God’s people breaking the first commandment time and again. But has the human condition really changed? Aren’t we too looking for a little wiggle room when we carefully wedge our wants and desires in front of God’s commands, justifying them with our own standards for good and evil?

For those who have had  
an abortion there is a **Word of Hope**  
for a broken spirit  
and tormented heart ...  
888.217.8679

"It's just not fair to bring a child into the world when I can't provide for him .... We'll save money if we live together; why make two payments when we can make one? ... It's compassionate to end her life full of suffering ...."

Yes, just as Adam and Eve turned away from the greatest Love-giver and Life-giver that ever was and ever will be, so too we turn away. We refuse to follow God's Law, a gift of love that is meant to protect us, and knowingly take a bite of the same poisonous fruit. Like Paul we must confess, **"I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing"** (Romans 7:19). Santayana was right when he said something is deeply wrong with the world, but that something is sin, not a need for better education about history. The human condition hasn't changed—not one bit.

But here's the good news: God hasn't changed either.

Hebrews 13:8 reminds us that **"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever,"** and, while the Bible is filled with stories of God's people turning from Him, it is also filled with stories of God turning His people back toward Him. It is overflowing with examples of God's great love and mercy, of His works of forgiveness and rescue. When Cain deserves death, God marks him and spares his life. Later, God keeps His promise to Abraham and gives Sarah a son. He forgives David, and He saves Jonah in the belly of a fish. The list goes on and on—it even includes you.

As responsible historians then, we begin to see another pattern: Forgiveness. Love. Life. God has saved creation; He has given us a new nature in Christ; we are washed clean.

Because of God's saving work in our lives, we are made to be more than historians; we are privileged to be people of promise, called to be humans with hope. For our **"eyes have seen all the great work of the Lord,"** and this work has made us into living testaments for Him (Deuteronomy 11:7). As living testaments, we are called to share the story of Life, even when the words are difficult, even when these truths are unpopular. By the work of the Holy Spirit, we are empowered to echo the words of Simon Peter, **"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life"** (John 6:68).

And do you know what those words tell us? Someday, the human condition WILL change forever. Someday the fall will be forgotten. Someday we will see Jesus face to face.

It's going to be a glorious day, isn't it?

Until then, let us be more than historians. Let us recognize that the patterns of the past point not only to our need for a Savior, but also to the work Christ has accomplished for us. Let us live as For Life people, confident that our future is founded on promises that will be kept. And let us rejoice in the opportunities we have to share the message of LIFE with others!



Lutherans  
For Life





*Bethesda Lutheran Communities is a national organization providing homes and other services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and is celebrating its 115<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019. Headquartered in Watertown, Wis, Bethesda strives to become a central point of connection that unites people who have disabilities with communities and provides essential resources to help them live their lives to the fullest. The organization offers more than 300 programs across the country, and is guided by Christian faith. For more information, go to <http://www.bethesdalc.org>.*

When an employer is looking to hire, what are they looking for? They are probably looking for someone who will be dedicated, loyal and a valuable contributor. People with disabilities can be all of those things and more, but they're not always given the opportunity. We sat down with Nancy Liebhart and Karrie Zubke, Document Control Associates at Bethesda to gain the perspective of an employer of people with disabilities.

**Q. Describe the people that work for you and your department.**

*Nancy:* We have 11 people that work for us, seven of them are people with disabilities, three retirees and then some part-time workers. We are a great big family. Really everyone helps everyone else and we all get along great.

*Karrie:* Our employees prepare documents for the scanning process. We have workers that are in wheelchair's, a gentleman who is blind, and others with various physical and cognitive disabilities. We don't see them for their disabilities, just that they are able to complete their tasks and are great employees. We are the "fun" department! People can have headphones to listen to music. We tried playing it for everyone, but they all have a different opinion of what to listen to so now we listen to individual music. We have a lot of fun, dancing, singing.

**Q. When looking for a person to fill this job, what kind of qualities are you looking for?**

*Nancy:* We look for focus. They need to be able to get a good amount of work done. We also look for personalities that will fit in our work/family environment.

**Q. Describe an instance of one of your employees going above and beyond.**

*Nancy:* Well we have an employee, Daniel, who's blind but is just really something. He has really gone above and beyond with his abilities. He came in to do file sorting and said, "This is easy" and has just gone and done so much. We actually sent him on a file sorting project to one of our facilities in California. He got to fly on a plane for the first time! He will be helping the employees there sort through their files and decide what to keep to be scanned, and what can be tossed.

**Q. As an employer, have you had to make any kind of accommodations for your employees?**

*Karrie:* We just set up their work stations a little differently. Most accommodations are simple and easy. You don't see them as people with disabilities, just differently abled. You see them as a regular person. The slight modifications to each of their work stations was very easy to do.

**Q. What kind of advice would you have for another employer thinking about hiring a person with a disability?**

*Nancy:* I would tell them to give people with a disability a shot. They are usually harder workers, more dedicated to the job. They are really proud of their work and want to prove themselves.

*Karrie:* The people that would work for them are just happy to get a chance, happy someone gave them a shot. Most tasks can be broken down so they can do them. Sometimes they may have a job coach to come in and help them a few days a week, but that support dwindles as they feel more and more confident about what they are doing.

# Zion Youth News and Events



**Who doesn't love chocolate covered strawberries!?!**

*Just in time for Valentine's Day, our Youth Group will be selling chocolate covered strawberries Sunday, February 9<sup>th</sup> (after both services)*

*Please consider supporting our Youth who are planning ahead to attend the next LCMS National Youth Gathering in 2022 in Houston!*



The following is an excerpt from an official message ...

FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF  
PIONEER CAMP AND RETREAT CENTER, INC.  
TO THE EASTERN DISTRICT  
OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD

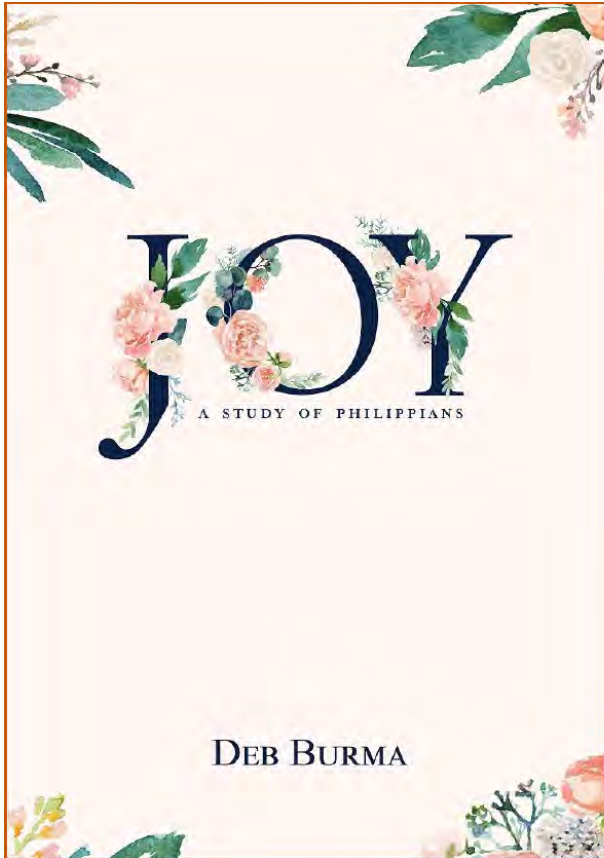
With great regret, the Board of Directors of Pioneer Camp and Retreat Center, Inc. wishes to advise the Board of Directors and the officers of the Eastern District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, the member churches of the Eastern District, and the general church membership that, as a result of the deteriorating financial condition at Camp Pioneer, it is unlikely that the camp will operate in 2021, and it is all but certain that the camp will run significantly reduced operations in 2020.

As many of you are aware, the financial condition of Camp Pioneer has been on a downward trajectory for several years. The factors causing this include increased costs of operations, in particular summer camp, and the inability to increase camp revenue to match such costs; decreasing camp attendance; increased employee expenditures due to minimum wage obligations; decreased giving to camp; inability to raise funds for necessary capital improvements resulting in needing to make such improvements from operating income; inability to amortize long term debt of the camp; and exhaustion of avenues of raising capital financing.

We understand you may have questions, some of which we may be able to answer. If you desire to speak to someone about the status of Camp Pioneer feel free to call Camp Pioneer at (716) 549-1420.



# WOMENS MINISTRY



## Women's Bible Study

Join us for the last 2 lessons!

When I make time for Bible Study...  
I still seem to have time for everything else!

**Thursdays 7-8:30 PM**

Contact: [linda.w.kroeger@gmail.com](mailto:linda.w.kroeger@gmail.com)

**Express the joy that cannot be contained:**

... that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

**Philippians 2:10-11 (ESV)**



## This Lenten Season, let us fix our **EYES ON JESUS**

When the characters in the Passion narrative look at Jesus, what do they see? In most cases, people misunderstood who He is and what He was doing. In some cases, by faith, people recognized Him aright. Our Lenten series this year, based on the Gospel according to St. Mark, will examine how the various people around Jesus viewed Him—and how we should view Him. We will “fix our eyes” on what Jesus has done to save us from our sins by His holy, precious blood and innocent sufferings and death, and celebrate what God sees on account of His work: our justification for His sake.

Join us at worship as we explore  
this new theme

February 26 – Ash Wednesday Service  
March 4 – Lent Mid-Week Service #1  
March 11 – Lent Mid-Week Service #2  
March 18 – Lent Mid-Week Service #3  
March 25 – Lent Mid-Week Service #4  
April 1 – Lent Mid-Week Service #5

# SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Sunday school begins at 9:15 am in classroom #205. Students from Preschool (age 3) through 6<sup>th</sup> grade meet for devotions before going to their classes. Parents with children in Preschool -4<sup>th</sup> grade should pick their children up at the classrooms by 10:20 am.

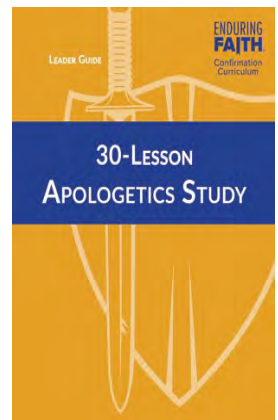
## February — March Teachers and Helpers

Session 6 Dates	Session 6 Lessons	Pre - K	1 - 2	3 - 4	5 - 6
February 2	Elijah is Taken to Heaven	Megan Glasser	Carrie Lemonovich	Andy Weldon	Tess Carter
February 9	Naaman and Elisha				
February 16	Jonah				
February 23	<b>Elmcroft Field Trip</b>				

Session 7 Dates	Session 7 Lessons	Pre - K	1 - 2	3 - 4	5 - 6
March 1	Hezekiah Prays	Christine Chilcott	Carrie Lemonovich	Linda Kroeger	Mike Wallace
March 8	Jeremiah and God's New Covenant				
March 15	The Three Men in the Fiery Furnace				

## Upcoming Events & Important Dates

February 23 — Elmcroft Senior Living Field Trip to sing for residents (including Zion's own Tom Bicusky!)



## February Apologetics Topics for Post-Confirmation Students

February 2	Is the Creation Account True?
January 12	What Do We Know About Evolution?
January 19	Why Does the Account of Adam and Eve Matter?
January 26	Is There Evidence of the Flood?



In the back of the Church, you'll see that we are collecting donations for Bible storybooks for kids in Ethiopia.

To date, we have raised **\$1,750.00**, exceeding our \$1,000 goal!!

That's **350** Bible storybooks in the Ethiopian language!

The final Sunday for donations is February 9<sup>th</sup>.

Please make checks payable to Zion Lutheran Church Sunday School or Lutheran Heritage Foundation (with "How Can I Understand" in the memo line).



**LUTHERAN HERITAGE FOUNDATION**  
Worldwide Lutheran Translation Projects  
[www.LHFmissions.org](http://www.LHFmissions.org)



**Save the date!**

June 22 – 26, 2020

9 am - Noon



## Seasons Change as Love Endures

As the warmer spring temperatures and winds blow in the northern hemisphere, people begin to prepare for the refreshing seasonal changes. Our closets and our seasonal migrations reflect preparation. Closer to the Equator, the changes are subtler. Yet the God-given cycles remind us that the winds of change are inevitable.

These changes remind us that one thing doesn't change. It's truth is based in all of Creation. History gives evidence of the irrefutable truth of God's Word; that His love in Jesus Christ endures forever. His love is the eternal constant, the only thing that doesn't change!

Changing seasons don't only apply to the weather. It also applies to circumstances where we manage life and all of life's resources. Whatever season of life you are in, God's love motivates we who recognize and believe by faith, that faithful stewardship of material and spiritual blessings cares for what is loaned to us for our life's seasons.

This stewardship reflects Creation's First-Fruits. With God as the priority among earthly concerns, our decisions reflect how we spend time, use talents and share wealth entrusted to us. During our life we give the first-fruits to the Lord in keeping with the gift of faith given to us by God's Holy Spirit's Gifts.

When our earthly life changes from mortality to immortality, we can continue the planting of love that endures forever. Our own 'lifetime plan for giving', expressed in our estate and financial plans, can care for people we love and further ministries we care about.

Yes, change is a reliable constant in life's sojourn. But God's great eternal love in sending His Son Jesus to rescue us from being eternally forsaken by God, compels us not to keep His grace to ourselves. For guidance to reflect faith in your earthly plans during the seasons of life, contact:



Ron Grimm  
LCMS Foundation  
Gift Planning Counselor  
(412) 584-7039  
[Ron.Grimm@lfnd.org](mailto:Ron.Grimm@lfnd.org)

Proverbs 16:9 A person may plan his own journey, but the Lord directs his steps.

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***Join us for a presentation ...***

### **Lifetime Plan for Giving**

Sunday, February 16th in the fellowship hall following late service

How can you provide for your heirs and support the Lord's work? Join us for a light lunch and a presentation by LCMS Foundation Gift Planning Counselor Ron Grimm that will assist you in developing the lifetime plan for giving that God has written on your heart. His expertise can help you plan and direct your passion for giving to family and ministries for the Lord's work today, tomorrow and forever. Sign up in the narthex, or contact Ron at (412) 584-7039, [Ron.Grimm@lfnd.org](mailto:Ron.Grimm@lfnd.org).



## What About...

# Living Together Without Marriage

Increasingly, men and women choose to live as husband and wife without being married. This pamphlet will answer some questions asked about living together.

### What is marriage?

We learn from the Word of God that marriage is the lifelong, exclusive union of one man and one woman, as husband and wife. Marriage is a part of God's creation. Thus, we read in God's Word, the Bible: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24; cf. Matt. 19:5-6; Eph. 5:31). Elsewhere we read, "Since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband" (1 Cor. 7:2). And, "Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral" (Heb. 13:4). Marriage is such a precious blessing that God inspired the Apostle Paul to describe marriage as a picture of Christ's relationship with His bride, the church (Eph. 5:22-33).

### Why is it wrong for a couple to live together without marriage?

Simply stated, a couple that lives together as man and wife without being married is sinning. God's Word is clear: "You must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.... Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more" (Eph. 4:17-19). Our Lord Jesus Christ once helped a woman living with a man who was not her husband to recognize that what she was doing was wrong (John 4:16-18). Lutheran Christians believe that the sixth commandment, "You shall not commit adultery," means, "We should fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do; and husband and wife love and honor each other" (Luther's Small Catechism [CPH:1986], p. 10). All of this is another way of stating the obvious: Men and women are not to live together as husband and wife, unless they actually are husband and wife. This is as true for 80-year-olds as it is for 18-year-olds.

### Why does the church care about what two consenting adults do?

The church cares because God cares. The Lord's Word is very clear in its condemnation of sexual activity outside of marriage. Consider these passages: "Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers... will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9-10). "Among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people" (Eph. 5:3). "The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery. ... I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21).

Why is living together such a serious problem? Because God's Word clearly shows that it is sinful for couples to live together without marriage, people who persist in behavior that God rejects and condemns as sin are choosing a course that may lead to eternal punishment. God's Word is clear: "If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left" (Heb. 10:26). And again, we read: "It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God. ... The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life" (1 Thess. 4:3-7).

### Isn't the church being 'judgmental'?

The church is declaring the truth of God's Word. On behalf of Christ and His people, pastors have the responsibility to speak clearly to couples living together and to proclaim the Word of God to them, both Law and Gospel. It is never easy for a pastor, or a congregation, to deal with couples who are living together without marriage. It is important for both pastors and congregations to deal with these situations pastorally and faithfully, in a caring manner. Couples, and their parents, are tempted to say, "So what? Everyone else is doing it; and besides, we live in changing times." In proclaiming the truth of God's



**What About...**

## ***Cont'd* .... Living Together Without Marriage**

Word about these situations, the church is being faithful, not judgmental.

### **Shouldn't a couple find out if they are compatible?**

Secular research has demonstrated that living together without marriage results in a relationship that is less stable and less fulfilling than marriage. Furthermore, couples who live together have a much higher risk of divorce when they finally do marry. Living together is a bad idea, even from a purely human perspective. One study notes, "Those who cohabit before marriage have substantially higher divorce rates than those who do not; the recorded differentials range from 50 percent to 100 percent higher" ("The Relationship Between Cohabitation and Divorce" [1992], *Demography*, 29:357–374). Studies conducted at Yale and Columbia Universities found that "the dissolution rate for women who cohabit premaritally with their future spouse is, on average, nearly 80 percent higher than the rates of those who do not" ("Commitment and the Modern Union," *American Sociological Review*, [1988], 53:127–138).

### **How does the church deal with these situations?**

The church, and the church's pastors, will inform couples living together without marriage that what they are doing is sinful. These conversations will take place in a loving manner; but in faithfulness to the Word of God, such conversations need to take place. These situations cannot be ignored or overlooked. It may be necessary to place unmarried couples living together under church discipline in order to help them realize the seriousness of the situation. This response may offend people. They may become angry at the church, or the church's pastor. Sometimes an entire family is upset when a situation they have ignored is finally dealt with. The Word of God has a way of cutting through all issues and exposing our sinfulness. That is the work of the Law of God, which shows us our sin. Offending people is certainly not the church's goal, nor is it the church's desire only to have people recognize their sin. The church wants people to see their sin, so that they may see their Savior. The proclamation of the Gospel is the church's highest priority. The church proclaims the Law of God so that people are able to hear and believe the good news that "The blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). The church wants people to hear and believe the Gospel, for only the Gospel has the power to change lives and behavior for the better.

### **How can a couple living together resolve the situation?**

A couple living together without marriage needs to take concrete steps to end the situation. They may choose to separate, with no plans for marriage. They may choose to separate until they are married—hopefully soon. It is important that they make a commitment to marriage counseling before their wedding, and perhaps also after their wedding. Some couples may choose to be married by an officer of the court. This is a completely valid marriage in the view of the church. Couples choosing this option are encouraged to have their marriage publicly recognized by the church as well. No matter what the decision, they will want to seek their pastor's counsel.

### **What is the ultimate solution to this problem?**

There are many solutions we can identify. Christian families need to understand what is right and wrong. Early on, parents need to speak with their children about God's expectations in regard to marriage. Pastors and congregations will want to work patiently and lovingly with couples caught up in this sin. Concerned Christian congregations need to pray that the Holy Spirit will work in the hearts and lives of those involved in this lifestyle in order to break down their resistance to God's Word. Christian congregations must not ignore the problem, but must deal with it faithfully. Congregations need to speak about this matter. Couples that recognize their sin need to hear God's comforting word of promise: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). If they choose to be married, they should do so with joyful confidence in God's forgiveness and His blessing on their marriage.

Dr. A.L. Barry  
President The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Scripture taken from the The Holy Bible: New International Version. © 1973, 1978, 1984, by the International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

# Service Participants

Date	Time	Greeters	Acolytes	Nursery
February 2	8:00 AM 10:30 AM	Wayne & Barb Oechslein Bill & Susie Bishop	Joshua Grimenstein Olivia Bonacci	Carrie Lemonovich Stephanie Eckels
February 9	8:00 AM 10:30 AM	Carl & Karen Bauer Lee & Megan Glasser	Noah Wallace Sam Bishop	Sharon Bogdan Christine Chilcott
February 16	8:00 AM 10:30 AM	Gene & Sharon Koop Elsie Dalla Piazza	Will Schrag Carly Garrubba	Megan Meyer Barb Oechslein
February 23	8:00 AM 10:30 AM	Bob & Diana Schmidt Kathleen Conn	Joshua Grimenstein Luke Lemonovich	Megan Glasser Jessica Boyle

Month	Elders	Altar Guild	8:00 AM Ushers	10:30 AM Ushers
<b>February</b>	Brian Pasquini Mike Wallace	Sarah Ali, Janet & Marian Oelschalger	Carl Bauer, Gene Koop, Ron Meier, Dale Miller	Tom & John Garrubba, Dan & Tracey Harris
<b>March</b>	Bill Bishop Mike Kroeger	Janet & Marian Oelschalger	Brian Pasquini & Megan Pasquini, Wayne & Barb Oechlsein	John & Kari Gresh, Andy & Dwight Weldon

If you are unable to participate on the assigned date, please find your own substitute and notify the church office of the change at (412) 221-4776 or [secretary@zlcb.org](mailto:secretary@zlcb.org).

# February Birthdays

2<sup>nd</sup> — Nell Wilson

4<sup>th</sup> — Ginny Kimberland

5<sup>th</sup> — Hope Mance

5<sup>th</sup> — Alice Miller

5<sup>th</sup> — Charles Wallace

6<sup>th</sup> — Tracey Harris

9<sup>th</sup> — Nancy Gielarowski

11<sup>th</sup> — Jenna Eckels

12<sup>th</sup> — Kitt Kroeger

13<sup>th</sup> — Tracey Coyle

13<sup>th</sup> — Chuck LaJeunesse

16<sup>th</sup> — Nathan Grimenstein

18<sup>th</sup> — Sarah Erbrecht

21<sup>th</sup> — Joyce Wood

22<sup>th</sup> — Olivia Gielarowski

25<sup>th</sup> — Gladys Kolljeski

25<sup>th</sup> — Betty Valentino

26<sup>th</sup> — Tom Erbrecht

27<sup>th</sup> — Kathleen Conn

27<sup>th</sup> — Kristen Neill



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## Bridgeville Area Food Bank



Collection for this month's Bridgeville area food bank is Sunday, February 9<sup>th</sup>. The "item of the month" is cereal and breakfast food.

You are also welcome to help at the food bank every third Saturday of the month between 7:45 am and 12:00 pm at Bethany Presbyterian Church.

# February 2020



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 8:00 am Men's Bible Breakfast
2 8:00 am Worship w/ Communion 9:15 am Sunday School & Bible Class 10:30 am Worship w/ Communion	3 6:00 pm 1st Year Confirmation 6:15 pm Grace Bell Choir 7:00pm 2nd Year Confirmation 7:00 pm Trustees Meeting 7:15 pm Adult Choir 8:15 pm Faith Bell Choir	4	5 7:00 pm Midweek Service & Bible Study	6 10:00 am Bible Study 7:00 pm Women's Bible Study 7:30 pm Elders Meeting	7	8 8:00 am Men's Bible Breakfast 1:00 Youth Group — Make Chocolate Covered Strawberries
9 8:00 am Worship w/ Communion 9:15 am Sunday School & Bible Class 10:30 am Worship w/ Communion FOOD BANK COLLECTION	10 6:00 pm 1st Year Confirmation 6:15 pm Grace Bell Choir 7:00pm 2nd Year Confirmation 7:15 pm Adult Choir 8:15 pm Faith Bell Choir	11	12 7:00 pm Midweek Service & Bible Study	13 10:00 am Bible Study 7:00 pm Women's Bible Study 7:00 pm Council Meeting	14	15 8:00 am Men's Bible Breakfast
16 8:00 am Worship w/ Communion 9:15 am Sunday School & Bible Class 10:30 am Worship w/ Communion Gift Planning Presentation following late service (lunch served)	17 6:00 pm 1st Year Confirmation 6:15 pm Grace Bell Choir 7:00 pm 2nd Year Confirmation 7:15 pm Adult Choir 8:15 pm Faith Bell Choir	18	19 7:00 pm Midweek Service & Bible Study	20 10:00 am Bible Study	21	22 8:00 am Men's Bible Breakfast
23 8:00 am Worship w/ Communion 9:15 am Sunday School & Bible Class 10:30 am Worship w/ Communion Special Voter's Meeting following late service (lunch served)	24 6:00 pm 1st Year Confirmation 6:15 pm Grace Bell Choir 7:00 pm Event's Meeting 7:00 pm 2nd Year Confirmation 7:15 pm Adult Choir 8:15 pm Faith Bell Choir	25 7:00 pm Sunday School Meeting	26 7:00 pm Ash Wednesday Service	27 10:00 am Bible Study	28	29 8:00 am Men's Bible Breakfast



Sunday morning worship at 8:00am and 10:30am



Zion Lutheran Church

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Bridgeville, PA 15017

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