**School News**

* Zion School plant sales have begun. Please see a school student or the office to order your annuals, perennials, select garden vegetables, herbs, seeds, baskets, and planters. The last day to order will be April 6th
* Zion began the track season March 9th for 5th to 8th graders. If you are a Zion school student or a member of Zion and would like to join the track team contact the office.

* 2020-2021 Enrollment is open to everyone! Tell your family and friends to get enrolled before the classes fill. If your child plans on attending next year please register. Zion is working on staffing schedules and the budget, so it is very important that we have your student(s) registered.
* P.E.A.C.E will be on Saturday, March 21st. Zion members are encouraged to attend as well as invite friends and family. Please join us for an evening of fellowship, supporting our school and Christian education. Please stop by the office for reservation forms or to make a donation. Please continue to check the announcements to learn of ways to become involved. Thank you for your support of our school.
* On March 17th the Zion band will participate in a Kearney Christian School Music Festival at Kearney Catholic at 6:00pm in the gym.
* Zion will not have school on March 25-27 for spring break.

The office will be closed these days. If you will need to be in the Church these days, please make arrangements in advance with the office staff.



**Announcements – March 15, 2020**



**Thou shalt silence your cell phone during worship**.

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**Our sanctuary has a HEARING LOOP**. Please switch hearing aids to T-coil mode. We have 2 headsets and receivers for use by those without hearing aids. Ask an usher for assistance.

Forgot your offering? Don’t have your checkbook or cash? Today or any day you can visit our website at zionkearney.com and click on the “giving” tab. Or, text “zionkearney” (one word) to 77977. You’ll receive a text back with instructions to start giving.

**Thrivent Choice Dollar Sunday - TODAY** – Designating Thrivent Choice Dollars to Zion Church and/or School is a simple way to support our ministry at no additional cost to you. **The deadline is March 31**. If you own a Thrivent policy of some kind you probably have Thrivent Choice Dollars available to designate to a qualified charitable organization like Zion. Stop by the Thrivent table in the hallway after church today and we can help you. You will need to know your Thrivent ID and password, or your Thrivent membership number. If you don’t have login information pick up an instruction sheet at the table. Thrivent Financial Representative Echo Peister will be here to answer any questions.

**Spring Nebraska Pastors’ Conference** – The congregation is invited to join us as we host the worship service for the spring Nebraska Pastors’ Conference. It will be Monday, March 16th at 4:30 pm.

**Mid-Week Service March 18th**- Our Lenten Midweek services are following the theme "Eyes on Jesus," which uses the metaphor of eyesight to examine how the various people in Mark’s Gospel viewed Jesus during His Passion. This Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. we consider “Denying Eyes” and will see how Peter and the other apostles fall away from Jesus. After being betrayed by Judas, He was abandon and denied. In what ways have we denied our Lord? The Elders will serve a variety of soups in the Fellowship Hall from 5:30-6:30. There will be a freewill offering.

**Loving Our Little Ones** – We love having our little ones in worship with us so that they can learn the language and rhythm of the Divine Service. We can help them by reserving the back three pews on each side for families with babies and toddlers in training. We also have a “cry room” in the North East corner of the narthex for their comfort and care. Thank God for the gift of these children.

**Easter Lilies**

It is time once again to order flowers to grace our chancel for Easter services on Sunday, April 12th. Lilies may be purchased for $15 each. Orders need to be turned in by Monday, March 30th. To simplify bookkeeping, please turn your order in to the church office. An envelope and signup sheet will also be available during the Bible Class Hour. You are welcome to take your plants home on Easter Sunday following the 9:00 a.m. service.

**Man Feast 2020** – Sunday, March 29, 5:30pm at Peace Lutheran Church in Grand Island. Doors open at 5:00pm. Tickets are $25. Enjoy ribs and fellowship. Featured speaker former NFL player Danny Woodhead. For males of all ages. Contact Pastor Gaunt by March 15th if you are interest in attending 308-455-0552.

**Help Wanted** – We need Sunday school teachers and substitute Sunday school teachers. If you are interested or would like more information please contact the church office.

**Radio Broadcast and Flowers** – Zion is in need of radio broadcast sponsors. Please consider sponsoring a radio broadcast, several families can sponsor together, or providing altar flowers to beautify the sanctuary. The sign up sheet is on the board across from the mailboxes. There are several open dates. Sign up today!

**Missions** - The first quarter mission for 2020 will go to Lutherans for Life. Please use the special marked mission envelopes located in the narthex. Please make sure that the missions are clearly marked and placed in the offering plate.

**Zion Youth Group** - Zion Youth Group will be participating with [Hearts & Hands against Hunger 125,000 Meals Packing Event](http://www.eventbrite.com/event/89926284939?utm_source=eb_email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=new_attendee&utm_term=event_name) from 1:00-2:30pm on March 29th. Please RSVP ASAP to any board member if you plan to attend.  This is a wonderful way for us to show Christ's love to others.  See the Youth Bulletin Board for more information.

**Zion Youth Easter Breakfast -** April 12 Easter Sunday

The Zion Youth will be serving a biscuit and gravy breakfast on Easter Morning. Youth, please plan to help serve 7:30 - 9:00 a.m.

Families, please sign up to bring beverages, fruit, plates, etc. The sign-up sheet is at our youth bulletin board!

**Higher Things Conference 2020** - We are planning to attend Higher Things in Fort Collins from June 29 to July 2.  If you are interesting please let Pastor DeLoach or Pastor Gaunt know as soon as possible.

**Opportunities to Worship during Lent**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **DATE** | **Service Time** | **LENTEN MEALS AT 5:30pm –**  **SERVED BY** |
| March 18 | 7:00pm | Elders |
| March 25 | 7:00pm | Trustees/Stewardship |
| April 1 | 7:00 pm | Teachers |
| April 5 | 9:00am | Palm Sunday Meal @ 11:30 |
| April 9  Maundy Thursday | 7:00pm |  |
| April 10  Good Friday Service | 2:00pm |  |
| April 10  Tenebrae Service | 7:00pm |  |
| April 11  Easter Vigil Service | 7:00pm |  |
| April 12  Easter Sunrise Service | 7:00am | Easter Breakfast served  8:00-8:45 |
| April 12  Easter Festival Service | 9:00am |  |

**Ex. 17:3 – “But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, ‘Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?’ ”** Even the Israelites who saw miracles with their own eyes fall into unbelief and fear. From this distance we can see how foolish their worry is. How foolish will our worries appear from the distance of eternity? The Lord cared for them, and He will care for us.

**Prayer at the Time of an Epidemic**

O Heavenly Father, we beg You to turn from us and from our neighbor the destruction and terror of this epidemic. We pray You, halt the Angel of Death as He relentlessly proceeds from dwelling to dwelling. We ask You, above all, not to let us be merely grief-stricken and fearful at this Your visitation, but we beg You to stir us all to an understanding of Your purposes. Grant us the grace of true, humble repentance. Tell us in words of life that You chasten those whom You love. Tell us that it is our good which You intend despite this evil. Grant success to the efforts to stem the tide of affliction and quicken hearts to bear the burdens of each other’s grief and need. Lord, it is Your mercy that we are not completely lost. Direct us to first tend to the needs of our soul and turn us earnestly to seek our peace with You through Jesus. Lord, You direct the course of life and death. Have mercy on us for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

The peace of the Lord be with you.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor DeLoach

**Zion’s Response to the Coronavirus**

We will continue to provide public access to the Lord’s good gifts of His Holy Word and Sacrament, for the comfort of your souls and the strengthening of your faith, for as long as we are permitted to do so by the Health Department. Your Lord cares for your needs of both body and soul, and so does your church. Thus, we are taking some steps at our church and school to prevent the spread of illness across our campus, and plan for the possible spread of the coronavirus in our community. We are monitoring new developments and will continue to reevaluate our steps and actions daily.

In the meantime, we can help protect ourselves and others from COVID-19 and other respiratory infections, while also minimizing the spread of infectious disease by:

* Avoiding close contact with sick people.
* Staying home if you are sick (dry cough, sore throat, fever, body aches, etc.).
* Washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based sanitizer.
* Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
* Covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze then throw the tissue in the trash.
* Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces such as doorknobs, desks, and tables.
* We are prepared to alter our procedures and planning should the situation change. We are also thinking ahead regarding the impact activities and worship practices will have in the context of the coronavirus. We will communicate if any changes take place when the time is appropriate.
* It is important to remember that handling the spread of a serious contagion like the coronavirus is primarily a task for public health agencies. Any directives from the World Health Organization, CDC, or local governmental organizations should be followed.

Here's where you can find tools and resources for individuals and families, schools, communities, businesses, healthcare facilities, and first responders on the

DHHS website -  [http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/coronavirus](http://dhhs.ne.gov/coronavirus)

and CDC's website – [https://www.cdc.gov/covid19](https://www.cdc.gov/covid19%20) .

The NE Department of Health and Human Services [DHHS] will allow county authorities to make decisions regarding school closings, length of closings, and quarantine requirements.

Regarding practices here at Zion Lutheran Church & School.

* Frequent cleaning of hard surfaces by our janitor and other staff.
* Instead of shaking hands, use a fist-bump or elbow-bump as a greeting.
* For communion:
  + The pastors will take additional measures to disinfect their hands prior to serving.
  + Individual glass cups are washed thoroughly after use.
  + Our chalice is made of gold, which has been shown to have “antiviral properties”.
  + The rim of the chalice is wiped after each use.
  + The alcohol content of the wine assists in limiting microbes.
  + Studies have shown that the chalice is actually more sanitary, if the above practices are followed, than individual cups, which are glass handled by more people.

It should be noted:

* If you believe your health will put someone else at risk, or if you believe your existing health conditions put you at risk from others, then please stay at home and call your pastors to see how the Lord’s ministry of Word and Sacrament may still reach you.
* There have been NO reports of disease being spread through use of the Common cup or individual cup. According to the CDC, due to the properties of precious metals, alcohol content and especially wiping the chalice, the risk is very, very minimal. In fact, there has NEVER been a documented case of the spread of infectious disease from using the Common cup.
* You are more likely to “catch something” from touching a doorknob, shaking hands or having a face-to-face conversation with someone infected than you are from taking communion.
* Our Lord Himself mandated that we eat and drink His Body and Blood in the bread and wine. While there will always be physical properties to the bread and wine (think of those who have gluten or alcohol intolerance), we seek to minimize these physical concerns by practices, but not by withholding or ignoring our Lord’s mandate and institution. In the Sacrament, He gives to us forgiveness of sins, life and salvation!

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/3284951>

<https://www.ajicjournal.org/article/S0196-6553(98)70029-X/abstract>

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1201971213001872>

Finally, “Be not afraid,” says your Lord, “for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” (Isaiah 41:10)