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As many of you know, we have a beagle. He smells like a beagle, he howls like a beagle, he eats like a beagle. His color is that of a beagle. (I won't go into details about his intelligence or crooked teeth so as not to hurt his feelings.) Yesterday I took him for his evening walk. A guy came walking by and said, "your dog looks pretty old." I responded that Winston is only ten. The guy said, "I don't think he is all beagle, he looks like he has some hound in him." Worried about references to his family, I stuck up for Winston immediately. "We are pretty sure he is all beagle. And, what is more important, he thinks he is a beagle and he acts like a beagle. So, he is a beagle." I did that in a friendly tone with a smile and we walked on. That might seem like enough justification to pay for a DNA test, just to be sure, but what would be the purpose? He is who he is, and even when he acts "out of character" we know he is a beagle. This conversation raises an interesting issue for all of us. Are we confident enough in who we are that comments or questions of others don't throw us off stride? This is such a hyper-sensitive time in our society that many fear to be labeled as something that they are not. Bullying and character assassination are pretty normal these days, and none of us want to be associated with the wrong crowd. I am not sure how we arrived at such a touchy place, but we are certainly there. Daily people lose jobs, reputations, appointments, and endorsements simply because their pedigree is in doubt. If a word or action is inappropriate, it does need to be addressed, but we live in a culture where forgiveness and second chances have gone by the wayside. Too many are looking for opportunities to lift themselves up by putting other people down. Many fear being stereotyped as someone they are not. So, how secure are you in who you are and what you believe? As loved and forgiven children of God, we have a good start. If we are secure in such faith, we know how we are called to live. If we know whose we are, then we know who we are. Hound? No way, Winston is a beagle. What about you?

Pastor Tim

THIS WILL BE A SPECIAL EASTER!

Last year the COVID shut down occurred several weeks before Easter. At the time, none of us had any inkling that we would still be in the midst of COVID restrictions twelve months later. Most of us assumed we would be shut down for a few weeks or months at the most. I remember commenting that the first Sunday we came back for worship we would celebrate Easter. Well ... the best laid plans of mice and men ... right?

Gradually we have been coming back for face to face worship, but it has been slow going. Now that more and more are receiving vaccine for the virus, and we have embraced procedures that allow everyone to be safe, we have had no problems.

And so, it appears that what we thought might happen in a few weeks will actually happen one year later. We will hold Easter worship this year (along with our normal Holy Week services.) And so, twelve months later, our first worship for most will indeed be Easter.

We are ADDING a third service for Easter to insure that there will be adequate distancing. The services will last about 45 minutes, which will minimize a crowded hallway as some leave and others come in.

The services will emphasize the joy of the empty tomb with brass and special music, and we will celebrate Holy communion. It will be helpful for all to keep wearing masks, for the sake of helping everyone to be safe.

Please plan on attending our Holy Week services and especially the most important service of the year — Easter!

Call the church office if you have any questions that we might help with. It will be good for Easter to mark a new beginning for our lives of faith and our life together at Zion.

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

March 28 / SUNDAY OF THE PASSION

8am and 10:30am

April 1 / MAUNDY THURSDAY

Noon and 6:30 pm

Holy Communion

April 2 / GOOD FRIDAY

Noon to 3pm and 6:30 pm

April 3 / THE VIGIL

6:30 pm

April 4 / EASTER!!!

8 am

9:00 am

10:30 am

Holy Communion

There is NO Easter breakfast for obvious reasons.

Having *THREE* Easter services will help with distancing.

Join us in celebrating the greatest miracle of all time ... an empty tomb!

For any unable to attend, we will post Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services on Facebook and YouTube.

Saturday (Easter Eve) we will post a special Easter video made by our families. Easter worship will also be posted on Facebook and YouTube as we have been doing each week!

THE TRIDUUM

It has become common in our culture to ridicule or ignore tradition as being out of touch or old fashioned. And yet the traditions that have enriched the lives of faithful Christians for over two thousand years do indeed have meaning and value worthy of keeping before us. One such is the Triduum, meaning "three days."

From early days of Christianity, Easter has been the greatest of all feasts, festivals, or celebrations. The forty days of Lent prepares us for that joy by remembering the passion of Jesus the Christ. Lent ends with the Holy Communion of Maundy Thursday as we begin our vigil at the cross and tomb.

The Triduum (from Maundy Thursday evening to Easter evening) are the three most powerful days for the lives of the faithful.

Maundy Thursday remembers Jesus' the gift of servant love in the washing of feet and the meal of Holy Communion which celebrates the body and blood of Christ being offered to set us free from sin and death.

Our time of worship ends and the vigil begins as we wait to see what will happen. There is no benediction until Easter worship ends, as all three days of worship are one with an emphasis on different parts of our wait.

The wait begins by remembering Jesus' betrayal, arrest, and being handed over in the middle of the night to Pilate.

Good Friday afternoon begins with the crucifixion scene as the focus, and the reality of Jesus' willing sacrifice in the manner of the lambs whose blood allowed Israel to escape the slavery and death of Egypt. The cross is a dramatic and painful moment of darkness as Jesus is abandoned, forsaken, and left to die.

Good Friday evening is our time to reflect on the entire story of Jesus' betrayal and death, Our vigil continues, as it did for the disciples after Jesus' burial. This is a somber time of waiting, as all must do at the moment of death. We wait for what happens next.

The Easter Vigil is our time on Holy Saturday for a more reflective review of the entire salvation history that began immediately after creation. It is a time of prayer and reflections just as those first disciples must have done as they reflected on God's loving plan and the hope for Jesus to accomplish what he came to earth to share.

Easter is the greatest day in the life of the Christian Church. It is the mother of all feasts, the granddaddy of all festivals, it is the most joy-filled, exciting, good news any one could ever hear. HE IS RISEN! Because we know the story so well, we miss the surprise and unrestrained joy that the first disciples were blessed to embrace. Can you imagine their reaction when they learned it was true?

As Easter is put to rest with the setting of the sun on Easter evening, the three days of such special worship and prayer are complete. These three days have changed the world forever, and the three days that alone give purpose and power to our daily lives.

This vigil and wait at the cross and tomb are rewarded with the gift that changes our dying and our living forever. Satan and all the earthly forces and powers are caught by surprise as God does the impossible and gives our lives back as a true gift of grace. Who would ever have imagined this is how the miracle of the Messiah would unfold? And how good for us that this is what happened. Saint Paul explains it this way, "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." [1 Corinthians 1:25 ESV]. Join us for the greatest three days ever!

CATECHISM REVIEW: Apostles Creed (part 1)

Think about how you introduce yourself to someone else. How do you explain “who” you are? Is it birthday, birthplace, family affiliation, educational and vocational background, where you live and who your family is? And businesses and the IRS need to know your phone number, your address, your social security number, your insurance policy, your place of employment, and your salary.

Now add to that your priorities. Your political views. Your recreation and exercise choices. Your favorite authors, teams, or stores. Think about all that you have to remember. *Any one could tell from these facts “who” you are and the values that guide your life.*

Any group, movement, or belief system has some sort of “creed” to share similar information. The word “creed” comes from the Latin “credo” which means “I believe.” And so any “creed” is a statement of what someone believes. What Christians believe is what makes them Christians. The Apostles’ Creed is our basic statement of belief about faith. It identifies “who we are.” For each, it is more important than earthly identifiers that are fragile and corrupted by sin and death.

The Apostles’ Creed is a proclamation of how our lives are different because of faith, and how our future is different from the temporary stuff of this earthly life. That is background.

Now think about how early disciples had to teach people “what they believed.” They had no handouts or handbooks or tracts. They had no videos or photographs. They were, for the most part, in the midst of people who either knew nothing about the God of Israel OR believed in a myriad of gods and goddesses and were influenced by all sorts of pagan rituals and rites. They were sharing a different system of values and wanted to make certain that nothing was left out and that no one was ad-libbing, adding, or

deleting important information. Gradually, through consensus and practice, they were in agreement about the “basics.” And gradually that took the form of a creed that was easy to remember and easy to recite.

Like the Pledge of Allegiance, the more we repeat it the easier it is to remember. And in a culture that was very often illiterate, most of what was passed along was done through speaking and listening. And so the Creed had a two fold purpose of remembering the basics and having readily available the answers to people’s questions about the Christian faith.

All that they had to share were words and actions. They could tell what they knew about Jesus, and others could look at how they lived and see how this was different from what the cultural norms had been, whether in Rome, Syria, Babylon, India or Greece. (See how much we take for granted!)

Gradually this became the catechism for teaching the faith, and a hymn or statement used in worship. Always, it was associated with Baptism, as a reminder or the tool for those coming into the faith to learn the basics. The earliest record we have of it in print was around the year 340 AD.

How much do you remember when someone asks “who you are?” Do you have to write all of your background information and values or can you remember the essentials. The Apostles’ Creed is our way to remember “whose” we are and what we believe — not only for our own devotional and worship lives, but in order to make daily decisions or share answers with anyone who wonders “what makes a Christian different than a Moslem or anyone else. This is a valuable gift, like a favorite song or a poem, that helps us remember, and ties us to every single Christian in every part of the world — for this is the one thing we all have in common. - tws

Worship Help for Parents and Children (of all ages!)

"Liturgical" churches (like Lutherans) follow a pattern of readings, seasons, and a structured form for worship that helps us grow into the gift of faith. "Liturgy" comes from Greek words meaning "the duty of the people." Luther helped get everyone (and not just priests) to participate in Sunday worship.

Biblical Roots of Liturgy

For Dads and Moms and other adults:

Our liturgies are not arbitrary collections. We sing what has been sung for centuries. Much of the liturgy is Bible texts, which allows us to "sing what we believe!" As we understand the Biblical roots, worship is truly enhanced!

"*Glory to God in the highest*" (Luke 2:14) is the song of angels at the birth of Jesus. How appropriate for a beginning hymn of praise! This helps set the tone for worship. Our response to God is joy!

"*Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain*" is (Revelations 5, 15, and 19) is the visionary song John heard the hosts of heaven sing at God's throne as they celebrated Christ's victory. Look at the Lamb in our stained glass window as you sing this hymn of praise. How fitting that Christians begin worship at the manger or the heavenly throne — from birth to eternal birth, the response is Joy!

"*Holy, Holy, Holy*" comes from Isaiah's vision of the majesty of God (Isaiah 6:3) The song "Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest" (Mark 11:9-10) comes from the story of Jesus' triumphant arrival in Jerusalem. As we prepare for Holy Communion, we reflect on the sacrifice of Jesus that brings life!

"*Lamb of God*" (John 1:29) is John the Baptist's confession of Jesus' identity and ministry. It is repeated (Revelation 5:6) by the heavenly host! Again, it is the sacrificial Lamb, God's own Son who gathers faithful people around

the Lord's table which truly is a foretaste of the feast to come.

"*Lord now let your servant depart in peace*" was sung by Simeon (Luke 2:29) at the temple, when he held the infant Jesus. What a beautiful way to celebrate an end to centuries of waiting for the Messiah! And these are the words that send us out into our daily lives — changed by that Messiah!

For Parents with younger children:

Did you sing when you rocked your "baby?"

Do you and your kids have favorite songs you sing at bath time or when traveling in the car? Or your favorite songs from preschool or a TV show. Songs bring us to a familiar place.

Remind your children how they feel when we sing songs they know — and they can sing too! Remind them of songs you sing at home, and how they bring familiar feelings back again and again.

When we sing in church, we are singing Bible stories. We sing about Jesus birth! We sing to remember that heaven is a happy place and Jesus loves us very much.

Maybe, when they are old enough, you could take one part of the liturgy and tell them the story that these words are about. Maybe that is your theme for the next few times you are in worship. Have them wait for that song from the story you have shared.

Once you have done that over and over for a month or so, pick the next one. Tell the story and get them ready when the song is sung in worship. See if that helps them to better listen, and understand, and sing!

Parenting takes work, but what better way to show our kids our love! Just like other songs, these familiar "tunes" help us to remember a familiar place in the arms of a loving God.

Blessings! Pastor Seeber

Family Life

Family Ministry News

Calendar

At home Sunday School will continue through May, but the floor in our space is now completed!

Vacation Bible School in “family pods” will take place the week of June 21-24

Middle School/High School families are invited for a week of service projects: June 21-24

IT'S TIME

I know I talk a lot about priorities, especially making faith a priority. It's kind of my job! This next statement might come across as a little blunt but know that it has your best interest in mind: It's time to come back.

It's obvious that many families are comfortable in groups of people again, as I see many posts about volleyball tournaments, basketball games, and family trips. That's great! We were created to be in community with others. It's time to return to being in the faith community of Zion. Everyone has their own opinion about worshipping at home and doing the at home packets, but there is much growth and support when we can be face to face with other Christians. It's time!

We have been able to have High School and Middle School classes on site because those families have been attending in person for a while now. Zion has procedures in place and we have created a safe environment. As we look toward Fall we definitely want to build back in our onsite Children's Ministry again! We miss seeing the kids! It's time!

Youth News

High School:

Bible Study

Sunday's 11:15am—Noon

Axe Throwing

Plan on the weekend of April 17/18 to go spend an hour throwing an axe at a target. Cost is \$10/person and sign up will come via email or Remind.

Summer Servant Event

We are planning on taking a week to serve July 17-24. If you are interested, we will have an information meeting on April 18th right after Bible study (Noonish). If you want to Zoom in, we can do that too!

Middle School Youth:

Confirmation Day

April 25th is Confirmation Day!

Echoes

God IS at work through people in our congregation...here is their story:

I received a text from a Young Adult who grew up at Zion and is now away at college. The text said: “I was watching some video on YouTube about Phil Robertson from Duck Dynasty giving his testimony today. And I looked at the comments and saw some depressing and negative comments from people saying things like “God isn’t real, you guys are idiots for believing this” and blah blah blah. My question for you is how are there people out there that actually don’t believe in God?”

I’ve seen God working in this student from the first day I met him. At that time (6th grade I believe) I doubted if he would ever take his faith seriously but by 8th grade he had matured and was one of the leaders. By senior year in high school he was telling his friends to take their faith seriously and was a good encourager.

After receiving this text we had a good conversation about social media and sphere of influence. However, it still amazes me that this student has grown so much in his faith—it’s gotta be God at Work!

Book Review: "The Clown in the Belfry; Writings on Faith and Fiction." Frederick Buechner. Harper Collins. 1992.

This book explores the connections between faith and secular writings that explore faith. Buechner spends time reflecting how contemporary writers of fiction have inspired his life, and helped his writings about faith. Buechner shares his own unique word plays to explore the power and peace that faith brings. If nothing else, this book can serve as a bibliography that can lead you to other writers that you may not have ever considered reading.

Buechner wonders why people write, and asks, "Are novels such as mine a kind of whistling in the dark? I think so. To whistle in the dark is more than just to try to convince yourself that dark is not all there is. It is also to remind yourself that dark is not all there is or the end of all there is because even in the dark there is hope. Even in the dark you have the power to whistle, and sometimes that seems more than just your own power because it is powerful enough to hold the dark back. The tunes you whistle in the dark are the images you make of that hope, that power ... In just the same way faith could be called a kind of whistling in the dark too, of course. The living out of faith." (p. 25)

He reflects on how writing helps intensify faith. "Writing strikes me as intravenous. As you sit there only a few inches from the printed page, the words you read go directly into the bloodstream and go into it at full strength. More than the painting you see or the music you hear, the words you read become in the very act of reading them part of who you are ... If there is poison in the words, you are poisoned; if there is nourishment, you are nourished; if there is beauty, you are made a little more beautiful." (p. 76)

Buechner has a wonderful chapter titled, "Paul sends his love" in which he outlines the

message of the Letter to the Corinthians. In a very clear way he sets up the issues that were prominent at Corinth. He then writes, "The Church in Corinth and everywhere else for that matter was indeed ordinary men and women who spiritually speaking hadn't cut their first teeth yet." (p. 49) Paul was having to answer questions about what it meant to be people of faith to people who had never been to Sunday School and for the first time were hearing about a God who loved them.

He discusses 1 Corinthians 13, where Paul used the Greek word, agape (the servant love of Christ) which is contrasted with eros (an earthly, physical, self-absorbed love.) "The power of agape—otherwise quite powerless — is perhaps nowhere better seen than in the tale of Beauty and the Beast, where Beauty does not love the Beast because he is beautiful but makes him beautiful by loving him." (p. 57) (!!!)

Buechner retells the story of the Prodigal son as only he can do (through the eyes of the prodigal son, as he finally came home and saw his father.) "As I might have guessed, the old man was waiting for me. I was ready to crawl to him, say anything he wanted. He looked smaller than I remembered him. His coat didn't look warm enough. We ran the last length between us if you could call the way he did it running. I couldn't get a word out. My mouth was pushed crooked against his chest he held me so tight. I was blinded by whatever blinded me. I could still hear though. I could hear the thump of his old ticker through the skimpy coat. I could hear his voice break." (p. 133)

Why a book about writing and stories? Buechner reminds us "Jesus didn't just tell stories. He himself is the story. Jesus is the Word made flesh, the truth narrated in bone and bowel, space and time." (p. 134) Buechner is an incredibly gifted writer. Any of his works are worth your time and attention.

Pastor Seeber

CAMPUS MINISTRY:

Western's last day of in person classes will be on Thursday, March 25th. Spring break week begins on Friday March 26th and continues until Sunday April 4th. The remainder of the semester will be done virtually.

Our Tuesday evening Conquer Series and our Thursday evening Bible study will continue on Zoom through the end of April.

My energy and efforts are focused on the upcoming 2021-2022 academic year, which will begin in September 2021. Namely, I have been spending time talking with WMU students and faculty in the Music program, as we are looking at launching a new outreach in Dalton Hall beginning in the Fall semester.

We are planning on offering a worship experience one evening during the week in one of the large classrooms in Dalton Hall. The plan and hope of this worship experience will involve using the gifts and talents of the music majors to play alongside Grayson helping lead songs and hymns.

The goal of this worship experience is twofold: One, to give Christian students an opportunity to use the gifts and talents of music to help them grow in their faith. Two, to offer a place where non-Christian students can hear and learn about the love of Jesus through the music and message and discussion that will take place.

I am excited about this new outreach effort on campus and will continue to spend time and energy talking with students and faculty to get as much feedback and input from them to help us better ascertain what will be most meaningful to reach students in this worship experience.

I continue to enjoy making phone calls to the members of Zion and getting to know our members better through these conversations.

God's blessings and peace to you all and thank you for your prayers and support.

Pastor Mark

OUTDOOR BEAUTIFICATION SCHEDULE FOR 2021

You are invited to join us as we care for and maintain the church grounds. Our clean up days will be WEDNESDAY starting at 8:30 a.m., and finishing around 11:30 a.m. Break time and refreshments occur from 10:00 to 10:30. If you are interested, contact Jim Mayer at 375-8342 or just show up on the days listed below. On the scheduled date, if the weather is not cooperating, the work day will be canceled. You will be called if your name is on the roster list.

SPRING WORK DATES — Projects include: cleaning the lot, preparing te beds for mulch, spreading mulch in the beds, weed control
APRIL 28, MAY 5, MAY 12, MAY 19, MAY 26

SUMMER WORK DATES — Projects include: trimming shrubs/trees, mucing the playground, weed control
JUNE 9, JUNE 30, AUGUST 11

FALL WORK DATES — Projects include: cleaning up the fall leaves
SEPTEMBER 22, OCTOBER 20, NOVEMBER 3

THE FINAL FALL LEAF CLEAN UP DATE WILL BE SELECTED ONCE ALL THE LEAVES ARE DOWN.

Tentative Date either:

Saturday, November 13 or 20

IF THIS SCHEDULE NEEDS TO BE MODIFIED IN ANY WAY, AND YOU ARE ON THE ROSTER LIST YOU WILL BE CONTACTED.





April BIRTHDAYS

4/1	Marvin Rutgers
4/2	David Alsvig, Brynley Bauer, Dorothy Decker, Natalie Linebaugh, Michael Nutsch
4/3	Mark Lundquist, Dan Seng
4/4	Janice Davidson, Janis Dinda, Bill Ferris, Charlotte Flamm
4/5	Andrew Newman, Carol Segerdahl, Neil Segerdahl, Beverly Snow
4/6	David Mayer
4/7	Michael Nuyen
4/8	Kim DuBois, Rebecca Morgan,
4/9	Michele Proos, Savannah Waterlander
4/10	Charles Krill
4/12	Alison Carlson, Garr Gast, Marilyn Lawrence, Kenneth Mutz
4/13	Robert Folck, Anthony Huberty, Sharon Oisten, Bill Squires, Michael Tucker
4/14	Nicholas Cosgrove, Julie Griesbach, Sarah Kamphuis, Rhonda Newman
4/15	Michael Bussey, Sarah Fitzgerald,
4/16	Jill Hamilton
4/18	Helen Reinkensmeyer, Joseph Zerbel
4/19	Noah Bentz, Anthony Cullimore
4/20	Donald Daenzer, Megan DuBois, Alma Rutgers
4/21	Norah Kamphuis, Austin Simmons
4/22	Lillian Klein, Sarah VandenBerg
4/25	Susan Longjohn
4/26	Avery Eastman, Steve Weber
4/27	Christine Brege, Madeline Brennan, Eric Carlson, Vincent Westra, Larry Zerbel
4/28	Corryn Adams, Lydia Holzerland, Dain Soppelsa, Helen Wise
4/29	Annabelle Wolfe
4/30	Elaine Biddle, Hannah Carlson, Bradd Schultz, Margaret Soppelsa

Parish Report

Confirmation

Audrey Hamilton
Evan Schoonbeck
Sean Skuratowicz

Items for the **Bazaar** along with
Craft items may be dropped off at
the church on

Monday, April 19th

from 9:00a.m. to 11:00am.

**Pull up to the doors by the
Sanctuary where you will be
assisted.**

Masks are Required.

KALAMAZOO LOAVES & FISHES

The wish list item for **April is Canned Tuna.**
Happy to announce, Zion is now taking
these donations onsite. Please use the
gray tubs in the Lobby under
the Office window Thank
you!



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April

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Holy Week Worship Schedule

MAUNDY THURSDAY

April 1

12:00 Noon and 6:30 p.m. Holy Communion

The vigil begins with the stripping of the altar at the conclusion of this service. We recall how Jesus endured his three-day journey by himself.

GOOD FRIDAY TRE ORE

April 2

12:00 Noon until 3:00 p.m.

During the same three hours our Savior endured the tree of death, that it might become a tree of life, we gather for meditation and prayer.

GOOD FRIDAY TENEBRAE

April 2

6:30 p.m.

We gather in evening's darkness as our vigil continues. Through reflective meditation and prayer we remember our Savior's love and await the gift this love brings.

EASTER VIGIL (HOLY SATURDAY)

April 3

6:30 p.m.

Prepare for Easter as we gather to end our vigil at the tomb. By the light of the Christ candle and the power of Baptismal water we are prepared for Christ's journey from death into life!

EASTER SUNDAY

April 4

8:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

As disciples gathered in joyful disbelief at an empty tomb, so we come together with our family in Christ on this most powerful morning of all! This is the day which changes our life, our death, and our living FOREVER!