

Zion Lutheran Church
330 Griswold Street
Elgin IL 60123

847-888-2882
www.zionelginil.org
zionelgin@yahoo.com

The Zion Spirit



"Grounded in Christ: Sent to be a blessing"

February 2019



Why Worship Matters

Many of you know that I (Pastor Dave) often meet with other leaders and consult with them about ministry, mission and leadership in the church. This takes me across the synod and around the country. As I do that work, it often means talking and thinking about things that also help me think about ministry here at Zion, too.

I was recently talking to a pastor who was trying to navigate the tension in their congregation about worship and youth work. The youth group and Sunday School meets during worship each week and doesn't attend worship regularly. In fact, almost none of the kids and youth regularly attends worship and the system is somewhat designed to make them choose. Of course, if we want adults who worship when they are older, then teaching them to worship and participate in worship life when they are younger is logical. But there is a lot of energy opposing changing what they do and how they do it, so the pastor and the leaders there will have to work it out.

But talking with this pastor about another congregation's dilemma, made me also think (thankfully) about our own practices. If we want people to worship, why do we want them to worship? Is there

something central about worship that matters? If so, what is it and how can we stay attentive to that in our own worship life?

In my mind, the primary purpose of worship is to provide a shared, communal place where we focus on the presence and work of God in our lives. That means that music, preaching, prayers, etc. are not ends in themselves but part of a larger effort to provide an environment that helps us notice that God is among us. Music should point us to God. Preaching should point us to God. Prayers should point us to God. These things are all pointers that when taken together help us to turn our eyes and hearts toward Jesus.

That's also why communion is the centerpiece of our worship. While some view communion as an optional thing (many Christian traditions celebrate it less than weekly, some as little as once a year), Lutherans see communion as an essential part of worship. Nowhere else in our lives is the presence of Christ more clearly shown and declared than in communion. As we receive the bread and hear the words, "The body of Christ given for you," what is being said is "Jesus is here!" When we then turn to

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receive the cup and hear the words, "The blood of Christ shed for you," what is being said is, "Jesus is here!"

In the end, that's is why we worship. We gather each week to celebrate, experience and renew our awareness that God has come to us in Christ. This centering act on Sundays provides the practice and focus for the rest of our week. On Tuesday, when you are stressed at work we want you to be able to remember, "In spite of this stress, Jesus is here." On Thursday when you have a problem with a family member or a friend we want you to remember, "In the midst of this struggle, Jesus is here."

People who worship live longer and are generally happier than people who don't. There is research data to support that statement. The reason we worship is the reason we live, because God in Christ is at the center of our lives. Not worshipping means that central truth can slowly fade away. Our lives can lose focus or find a new focus in something other than God's love in Christ. So, keep coming to worship. In good times and in rough ones, keeping God close to the center means always knowing that love and grace are with us, no matter what the circumstances.



Spaghetti Dinner – March 2nd from 4-7 PM

Our annual Spaghetti Dinner is held the first Saturday in March each year. An amazing crew of people, guide by the servant leadership of Andy Flores, produces one of the finest evening meals of any organization in the city. Members and local residents agree: this is a great event! The event is also a fundraising effort with a free will offering to provide a base of funds for maintaining the facility. This allows us to keep it in good repair and available to others in the community like AA, Soup Kettle, SWAN and more. So, if you are able to help be a part of the team, be sure to talk to Andy Flores. And if you like to eat and know people who do, be sure to come that night for dinner and bring your friends!

Godly Play

THANK YOU AGAIN for all the children's participation in the Christmas program!

Since we started Godly Play again in 2019, we have covered the **Ark and the Tent and the Ark and the Temple** stories. These stories explain how the people of God created a special place for the 10 commandments tablets that God gave to Moses - while they were still wandering people in the desert and when they came into the Promised Land. The children have made connections to parts of our church buildings and traditions already!

Story schedule:

Feb. 3 - The Exile and Return

Feb. 10 - The Prophets

Feb. 17 - The Prophet Jonah

Feb. 24 - Holy Baptism

Beginning in March we will begin Lenten stories.

Remember to have children by the Sunday School room door **before 9:45 am** so they don't miss out on sitting in the circle and listening to the story of the day!

PEACEMAKERS

After School Program Needs Volunteers

Zion's after school program has continued with a group of children from Lowrie Elementary School. And the program is both helpful and fun!

We are need of more adult volunteers, however. If you are available on Thursdays from 2:00 – 5:00 pm, please contact Dianha Ortega-Ehreth at 773-860-0588. Even volunteering once a month would be a huge help! And since we have only 4 months left, in the school year once a month is just four afternoons between now and the end of May.

Peacemakers children will have a St. Valentine party on Thursday, Feb. 14 from 4:00 to 5:30 pm and all children and families from Zion are invited! There will be fun games for Zion children and Lowrie children to get to know each other.

Financial Report Through Dec 2018

Oct	Income	Expenses
General	\$24,699	\$23572
Building Fund	\$1122	\$868
Year End	Income	Expenses
Total	\$253,718	\$231,049
Bldg/Roof	\$38,706	\$43,071

If you have concerns or joys to share, please email the church prayer chain at ZionElginPrayers@Gmail.com to place a request on the prayer line.



BIBLE READINGS for February

February 3

Jeremiah 21:8-14 (sermon text)
Matthew 23:37

February 10

Daniel 3:19-27 (sermon text)
Luke 12:4-7

February 17

Haggai 1:2-9 (sermon text)
Matthew 7:24-29

February 24

Esther 4:10-17 (sermon text)
John 16:31-33

March 3

Nehemiah 1:1-9 (sermon text)
Mark 1:1-8

Healing Service – February 19th

Our Befriender Ministry has a deep concern for providing chances for people to feel cared for and connected, to receive companionship and prayer. All of us have a need to be more whole. Sometimes we have physical, emotional and spiritual hurts that are blessed by the chance to sit quietly, hear words of love and encouragement from scripture, and to be prayed for. This year we will have at least five evening services, the first of which will be Tuesday, February 19th at 6:45 PM.



These services are reflective in style, intimate in gathering, and offer chances for individual prayer as well as for someone to pray for you while you receive the ancient practice of laying on of hands and anointing with oil. All of us benefit from this. Some of us may really need it a lot. So, plan to come for your own spiritual well-being and invite others you know to come as well.

Zion Children and Family Volunteering Event Set for April 6th

The children in Godly Play selected the organization Feed My Starving Children for their offering dollars to be sent at the end of the school year. This is a great organization that addresses world hunger in a very hands-on way. Volunteers can come to their location in Schaumburg to help pack food to be sent all over the world. Because volunteer shifts fill up fast, there is a HOLD on a shift for Zion on **Saturday, April 6, from 9:00 - 11:00 am.** All



Zion families and congregational members are invited to sign up! There are 25 spots to fill. Children must be ages 5 or older to participate WITH an adult. Contact Dianha Ortega-Ehreth at dianhaoe@gmail.com with questions.

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

8:30 a.m. Worship/ Holy Communion

9:45 a.m. Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Adult Education

10:45 a.m. Worship/ Holy Communion

FEBRUARY VERSE OF THE MONTH

Jesus said,
"Everyone then who hears
these words of mine and acts on them
will be like a wise man
who built his house on rock."

Matthew 7:24

Youth Group—Movie on Feb. 10th

This month our youth group will be going to the Daubert's home on February 10, following the late service. We'll have some lunch, then watch the movie, "Selma" and engage in discussion of the movie. "Selma" is the story of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other activists' historic struggle to secure voting rights for all people – a dangerous and terrifying campaign that culminated with the epic march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, and led to President Johnson signing the Voting Rights Act of 1965.



Spiritual Gifts Workshop – February 23rd

We have been blessed with many gifts and these gifts allow each of us to be uniquely formed to be part of God's work in the church and in the world. Knowing what these gifts are can help each of us use them more intentionally and effectively.

We are blessed to have a resource to help us assess our gifts, learn what they are and then take time to discuss how to put them to use. This resource was partially developed by Lutherans and then initially put into practical use by a Lutheran congregation in Wisconsin. Pastor Dave and Mandy Garcia did some work to shape this for our use and we have the assessment available on the computer. That means we can allow people to go on line, complete the assessment in 15-20 minutes, and then get results and a report to discuss. We'll be getting sign up materials in place and give the links out ahead of the event. That will allow everyone who comes to find out what their gifts are and learn more about them at the event.

The Spiritual Gifts Workshop will be Saturday, February 23rd from 12 noon to 3:00 PM. We will start with a light lunch and then have a time of teaching about gifts and small group time to discuss your gifts with others. It should be a fun day and a chance to grow a bit deeper in our faith and faithfulness.

New Members Class

Zion 101 – February 12th

A few times each year we offer chances to learn more about our faith and about the congregation's ministries. Zion 101 focuses on who Zion is and what Zion does. It is a chance to learn more about the ministries we all share and find new ways to get connected and involved. Zion is a lively, vibrant ministry and there are many things happening – God is up to a lot here! If you'd like to find out more about Zion or consider becoming a member here, plan to attend Zion 101 on February 12th at

Game Night—4th Fridays

It's a night for all ages – Game Night! It will be each 4th Friday of the month, so put it on your calendar! There will be some games provided, but feel free to bring your own or a deck of cards and find others to play with. We encourage sign up in advance, so that you can be contacted in case of bad weather and to play appropriately. Friends are welcome!

Chili Cookoff—5PM on February 9th

It's time for Zion's Annual Chili Cookoff! It will be Saturday, February 9. Cook your favorite chili and enter it into the competition. Entries need to arrive about 4:30. Competition begins at 5:00. We also need chili taste testers too, to vote for the winning chili. So come on out. There is no charge. If you would like to bring a side, or pot of chili, please sign the sign-up sheet in the overflow area. It's a lot of fun! Bring an empty stomach. Friends are welcome.

Men's Weeknight Ministry Group

The ELCA has a Lutheran Men in Mission program that encourages congregations to provide a base for men in the congregation to gather for support, study service and fun. Doug Haugen has overseen that ministry for the ELCA for the last 25 years.



Doug will be coming to Zion to discuss helping us start a group here on February 18th at 7:00 PM. We will be meeting in the church library and Doug will help us better understand what Lutheran Men in Mission is and how the men at Zion can start our own group here. If you are interested in being at this important startup session, please let Pastor Dave know.

Upcoming Events

Mar 2 – Spaghetti Dinner
 Mar 5 – Soup Kettle – We serve
 Mar 6 – Ash Wednesday. Lent begins
 Mar 13 thru Apr 10 - Wed evening Lenten study and worship
 April 2 – Soup Kettle – We serve
 April 6 – Feed My Starving Children
 April 21 – Easter
 June 16 – 21 Confirmation Camp