



ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
1254 S UNION STREET
SHAWANO WI 54166



POINSETTIAS!

\$25 each

Orders are due by Fri., Dec. 12.

ZION KIDS OF THE KINGDOM CHRISTMAS PROGRAM



SAT. DECEMBER 13 AT 5PM

Come celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ with an unforgettable Christmas program that leads kids on an exciting journey to the heart of the season—with Jesus as their True North!



FOCUS December 2025

WELCOMING ALL, GROWING & SHARING GOD'S LOVE

PASTOR'S COLUMN



LESSONS FROM JOSEPH (MATTHEW 1:18-25)

A question we'll undoubtedly hear many times between now and Dec. 25 is this: "Are you ready for Christmas?" I suppose what is really being asked is, "Have you put up all your Christmas decorations? Have you finished your Christmas shopping? Have you mailed your Christmas cards? Have you put on your calendar all the places you're supposed to go? Are you ready for Christmas?"

She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.

Matthew 1:21

We meet ourselves coming and going, so we call it "the Christmas rush." Sometimes the Christmas season becomes quite chaotic, and because of that we tend to forget much of the reason for the season. You see, when I ask the question, "Are you ready for Christmas?" I'm asking about more than your activities. I'm asking about your attitudes, because every once in a while I hear someone say, "I just can't get into the Christmas spirit!" Maybe you've said it too.

With that in mind, let's think once again about what Christmas really means. Christmas says that "God became a human being. God expressed His love by living among us, by walking with us, and talking to us." That's what Christmas means. But

what are the right attitudes we ought to have so that Christmas can really happen in our homes and in our lives?

Christmas comes as a time of peace, but there is conflict. Christmas comes as a time of joy, but there is so much sadness. Christmas comes as a time of love, but there is so much hatred in our world. We cry out, like Joseph must have cried out when he found out that Mary was with child, "God, how can this be?" But, like Joseph, we hear a still, small voice from God saying, "Trust Me."

God's ways are not always our ways. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts, and we may never understand all that God is doing this side of heaven, but God says, **"Trust Me, and it will all work out."** Paul wrote, **"We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose."** (Romans 8:28) Christmas happened because Joseph trusted God. And we need to learn to trust God, too.

"We need to learn to care about other people." You know, Joseph's assignment seems to be a simple one, and that is the way we often portray him in our Christmas plays. We picture Mary looking so angelic. Over here are excited shepherds, and over there are the wise men with their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. In the midst of them all is the Christ child in the manger, looking so pure and clean. Over there on the side stands Joseph. His role isn't a starring one, but it's so important. His task is this, "Take care of Mary and the baby Jesus." Joseph had the vital role of caring for the needs of others.

Christmas comes once a year, and this season often makes us more sensitive to the needs of others. But there is so much

that needs to be done that we often find ourselves frustrated. But still we try. Maybe the finest descriptive title that can be given a church is this, "a church that really cares." Christmas came because Joseph cared about Mary and the baby Jesus. It will also come for us when we learn to care about others, too.

He didn't know that after Jesus was born, he would have to take Mary and the baby into Egypt. He didn't know that he would be separated from his hometown and his loved ones there for a long period of time. He didn't know all the demands that would be made on his time and his pocketbook. But whatever God asked of him, Joseph freely gave.

When God gave Himself, Christmas happened. When Joseph gave himself, Christmas happened. There is nothing wrong with giving gifts, but the greatest gift is the gift of love. "You can have my life." That is what God said at Christmas time. "You can have Me. I give Myself." That is still the greatest gift of all.

Are you ready for Christmas? Perhaps you won't be able to get all your shopping done or not. Perhaps you won't be able to attend all the events you want to attend. But I hope that you are ready in attitude. I hope you are ready for the real spirit of Christmas to come, because if you're ready for that, it'll happen. It'll happen in the greatest way of all.

Jesus Christ stands before us today, inviting us to make important decisions about our lives & our eternity. He extends His nail-pierced hands & says, "I have given My all for you. Will you give your



YOUTH TO SELL CHRISTMAS COOKIES

The ZION Youth will be selling Christmas cookies in December. Date is yet to be determined! Watch for more info in the NEWS. R

ZION JOINS HOLIDAY STROLL

ZION is delighted to be part of Shawano's festive **Holiday Stroll & Tree Lighting** featuring 115 beautifully decorated trees sponsored by local businesses and non-profits. Come enjoy the lights at **Franklin Park** and be sure to look for ZION's tree as you stroll through this community tradition. R

CLARENCE SCHAMPERS & EWALD GIESE FUNERALS

Pastor Ludford led the funeral for Clarence W. Schampers, on Wed., Nov. 19 at Swedberg in Shawano. Ewald “Jake” Giese Jr. on Sat., Nov. 22 at 11 AM here at ZION, burial was at Jerusalem Cemetery. He is the father of ZION member Donna Beyer. We lift their families in prayer for grace in their grief. R

THOSE IN NEED OF HEALING

We remember in prayer: Richard Bahr, Gerald Bartline, Dale Bergsbaken, Debbie Bernard, Leslie Buckbee, Marilyn Dahl, Terry Fusek, Larry Gueths, Lynn Hintz, Pete Hintz, Adeline Holtz, Joanne Horn, Bob Janicki, Helen Kaurala, Ken Spreeman, and Jim Yeakey. R

ATTENDANCE & OFFERINGS AS OF 11/24/2025 Attendance | In-Person-675 | YouTube-662 Offerings | \$52,724 YTD Offerings \$439,665 (As of 11/24/2025) YTD Budget \$456,098

NEW WATER BOTTLE FILLERS INSTALLED

ZION has installed two new Elkay water bottle-filling stations, replacing the former drinking fountains, – yes, the bubblers for all you true Wisconsinites – providing a cleaner, efficient source for drinking water at ZION. Thanks to Tom Laude, who secured a grant from the Anita Hartman Fund for Health and Wellness to provide these upgrades approved by Church Council. The total for the two was \$6,000. We are grateful for this investment in our well-being. R

THANKS FOR SUPPORTING THE HOLIDAY MARKETPLACE!

A heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped make this year’s Holiday Marketplace a wonderful success, our volunteers, crafters, bakers, donors, and all who attended or invited a friend. Your generosity, time, and support created a joyful event filled with community spirit. We are grateful to share that the \$870 of proceeds raised will be donated to this year’s chosen charity, WEE Care, helping support families and little ones in need. Thanks for being a blessing to ZION and our community! R



NEW LIBRARY BOOK Fragile Designs by Colleen Coble

Since her police-officer husband Eric’s mysterious murder, Carly Harris has struggled to support herself and her infant son. Her career as an antique dealer isn’t sustainable, so when her grandmother suggests turning the family’s historic Beaufort home into a bed-and-breakfast, she begins clearing it out. In the process, she uncovers a secret Eric kept, and an heirloom someone may kill for. Homicide detective Lucas Bennett isn’t Carly’s biggest fan, but when she believes she’s found a lost Fabergé egg that could endanger her family, he steps in to help. Drawn into a mystery tied to the Russian mafia, Carly and Lucas discover they may have found something more precious than gold. It’s only a matter of time before Carly, or someone she loves, gets hurt. R ~ ZION Library Committee



HOMEMADE HOLIDAY MARKETPLACE BAKE SALE POWERS WEE CARE

Wee Care extends a heartfelt thank you for the incredible support shown at the Holiday Marketplace. Between Saturday’s Craft Fair and sales at ZION, the bake sale raised \$2,345 which will provide two weeks of food bags for local children. With 139 bags needed each week at \$8 per bag, your generosity matters. Thank you to every volunteer who made this five-day marathon possible. Whether you shopped, mixed or rolled dough, worked the ovens, or helped sell the goodies, you earned a gold star for helping feed Shawano’s school children. Wee could not have done this without you! Thanks also to the ZLCW for their donation of fabric jar openers. They were a hit and also raised support, as well. R

FESTIVAL OF TREES

Were organizing this year’s Festival of Trees again. Committees, groups, or anyone is invited to trim an artificial tree with any theme or style. Decorating dates are Dec. 8-12. Last year’s trees added a beautiful festive touch to ZION. We hope you join in and make this year’s display memorable! Sign up at the Info Desk or call Kristin or Karen Childs. R



stephen MINISTRY. LEARN, GROW & SERVE AS A STEPHEN MINISTER

Do you have gifts for caring, encouragement, and listening? ZION is training another class of Stephen Ministers starting Jan. 4. Stephen Ministers provide emotional and spiritual support to those facing challenges such as grief, illness, or other life transitions. To learn more or to be matched with a Stephen Minister, contact: Judy Laude, Nancy Schultz, or Kristin WhiteHorse. R



ZION’s High School Youth Group had the joy of adopting a local family this Christmas, purchasing gifts for two seven-year-old children through a community food pantry. The students shopped thoughtfully and generously, choosing items to help make the season brighter for these little ones. Thank you to our students and families for helping share the light of Christ in our community this season! R

HEALTH & WELLNESS

PREPARING FOR ADVENT — CARING FOR YOUR HEART, SOUL, AND BODY

As we enter the Advent season, we prepare our hearts for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ. This time is filled with anticipation, reflection, and hope. However, the weeks leading up to Christmas can also become overwhelming as we try to do too much, say “yes” to every invitation, and neglect our own self-care. This Advent, let us take a mindful approach to our health and well-being by inviting Christ’s peace into every aspect of our lives — body, mind, and spirit.

Here are some ways to stay healthy and enjoy this holy season:

- [1] Spend time in solitude with devotions and prayer. Set aside quiet moments each day to be still before God. Read Scripture, pray, and reflect on the gift of our Savior’s birth.
- [2] Take care of yourself by eating right. Enjoy holiday treats in moderation and choose foods that nourish your body so you can serve God and others with energy and joy.
- [3] Exercise regularly. Even a short walk can lift your spirit, clear your mind, and remind you of God’s creation around you.
- [4] Get enough rest. Rest is a gift from God. Make time for sleep and Sabbath moments to renew your strength.
- [5] Listen to your emotions and feelings. The holidays can bring a mix of joy and sadness. It’s okay to feel both. Share your thoughts with a trusted friend, family member, or pastor.
- [6] Select what activities you will participate in. You don’t have to do everything. Choose the gatherings and traditions that bring you closer to Christ and those you love.
- [7] Ask for help when needed. We were not meant to do life alone. Let others share your load — it’s a blessing to both give and receive help.
- [8] Give gifts within your budget. The greatest gift has already been given to us — Jesus Christ. Let your giving be thoughtful and from the heart, not stressful or excessive.
- [9] Watch your alcohol consumption and drive sober. Celebrate responsibly. Protect yourself and others by making wise choices.
- [10] Smile at those who serve you. Show kindness to those working in stores, restaurants, and delivery services. A simple smile or “thank you” can brighten someone’s day. As we prepare for Christ’s coming, may we do so with hearts full of gratitude, bodies cared for in love, and spirits centered on the true meaning of Christmas — the birth of our Savior, who brings us everlasting peace. R

SHARING CHRIST’S LOVE: ZION’S CHRISTMAS DRIVE FOR HOMME YOUTH

ZION’s Health Ministry Committee is launching our annual Christmas Clothing and Toy Drive to support the young men at Homme Youth & Family Programs in Wittenberg, Wis. For generations, LSS has served at-risk youth through treatment programs providing safety, stability, counseling, education, and a path toward healing. At Homme, dedicated staff walk alongside boys who have experienced trauma and hardship, assuring each one that his life has immeasurable value. During the Christmas season, they bring joy through small gifts that remind the boys they are remembered. This year, we are honored to partner with Homme by organizing a community-wide collection of needed items and placing festive boxes. Your participation, whether a donated gift, a prayer, or helping hands, will share Christ’s light, extend hope, and brighten Christmas for these young men as we support their 2025 Operation Christmas drive. (List of items to donate, at right.) R

MAKING HOLIDAY FOODS HEALTHIER — SIMPLE WAYS TO CELEBRATE WELL

The holidays are a joyful time to gather, give thanks, and celebrate the birth of our Savior. Food is a big part of those celebrations, but it’s easy to overindulge. The good news is — you can enjoy all your favorites and still make them a little healthier!

Try these simple tips this season:

- [1] Cook smart. Roast or bake instead of frying. Choose lean meats and trim visible fat.
- [2] Lighten recipes. Use Greek yogurt instead of sour cream, applesauce instead of butter in baking, and low-fat milk instead of cream.
- [3] Go easy on sugar and salt. Cut back by one-third and use herbs, spices, or citrus zest for flavor.
- [4] Add fruits and veggies. Colorful produce brightens the table and adds vitamins and fiber.
- [5] Watch portions. Use smaller plates and eat slowly — you’ll enjoy your food more and feel better after.
- [6] Enjoy treats mindfully. A small piece of dessert is enough to satisfy your sweet tooth.
- [7] Stay active and grateful. Take a walk, play a family game, and thank God for His many blessings! R

Homme Youth & Family Programs Christmas Collection Drive

Hosted by the Health Ministry Committee Through December 10

The box is located in the Narthex Area. Thank You for Your Donation!

- Population: Boys ages 10 through 18*
- New clothing sizes: SM through XL men’s
- Snow boots sizes 8-13 men’s
- Snow pants men’s M through XXL
- Sport team t-shirts/sweatshirts men’s SM through XL
- Snow gloves, slippers, funny socks
- Watches and wallets
- Car Air Fresheners (tree-shaped for rooms)
- Men’s necklaces
- Hygiene products: deodorant, soap, lotion, cologne
- DVD (G or PG Movies)
- Handheld game with built-in games (usually 250 games built in)
- Rubik’s Cubes
- Construction paper
- Candy for stocking fillers
- Children and young adults coloring books
- Children & young adult books (age-appropriate)
- Gift Cards: Dollar General, Subway, McDonald's, Taco Johns

* No bathrobes, food, or glass items, please. Gift bags are welcome; please leave gifts unwrapped.



JANUARY* ZION LAY MINISTRY SCHEDULE

Role	SAT. 5 PM
Greeter	Judy Kilbourn
Ushers	Diane Rugalski, Scott Glysch
Lay Reader & Communion Assistants	Bob Hass, Steve & Joy Dalke
Projector Operator	Randy Steffen

Role	SUN. 8 AM
Greeters	Bart & Debbie Defere
Ushers	Tom & Judy Laude
Lay Reader & Communion Assistants	Al Wichmann, Jerry Donath
Projector Operator	Matt Heling, Vicki Heling
	Marge Wichmann
Projector Operator	Julie Effenberger

Role	SUN. 10:30 AM
Greeters	Lorin Preston
Ushers	Cooper Boucher
	Lorin Preston
	Cooper & Jackson Boucher
Lay Reader & Communion Assistants	Sara Boucher & Sons
Projector Operators	Jenny Tonn (Jan. 11 & 25)
	Noreen Christian (Jan. 4 & 18)

*Youth will cover Lay Ministry on the third Sun. 10:30 AM
Worship Service, except for the Projector Operator.

Shawano County

TOYS FOR TOTS



2025 APPLICATIONS

Children ages: Newborn to 18 years old
Must live in Central & Eastern Shawano County
Registration Opens Online Nov. 3rd ~ Dec 11, 2025

2025 VOLUNTEERS

Always needed and welcome!
Earn community service hours!
Make a difference in our community!

2025 DONATIONS

New unwrapped toys or books ~ Thank you for remembering our teens ages 13 ~ 18!
Drop sites all over the county
Online monetary donations gratefully accepted

To Apply, Volunteer or Donate:
Scan QR Code or visit: shawano-wi.toysfortots.org

ACOLYTES

Jan. 4

8 AM

10:30 AM

Levi Effenberger

Lane Laude

Olivia Phalen

Open

Jan. 11

8 AM

10:30 AM

Addie Bernath

Kenley Wilson

Audrey Moeller

Jan. 18

8 AM

Lee Wolff

Bailey

WhiteHorse

10:30 AM

Two Open Spots

Jan. 25

8 AM

10:30 AM

Two Open Spots

Kyle Huebner

Open



Jan. 25, 2026
11:30 AM
Sanctuary

ANNUAL MEETING

MEMORIALS

In Honor of Pastor Scott Richard & Ginny Vraney (Van & Gym fund)

In Honor of Brynlee Ray's Confirmation

Peggy Ray (Wee Care fund)

THANK YOU

Dear ZION Congregation,
Thank you so much for the box of sunshine.
I deeply appreciated the thought and gifts. Thank you so much for you support.
~ **Rosella Wegner**

ONGOING WAYS TO CONNECT

- **Worship Services:** Sat. 5 PM; Sun. 8 AM and 10:30 AM. Holy Communion at every service.
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- **Confirmation Class:** Wed. at 6 PM.
- **Men's Bible Study:** Tues. at 8 AM at Shawano Cafe.
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- **MomCo/KidCo:** First and third Thurs., 10-11:30 AM.
- **Strong Bodies Exercise Classes:** Mon. & Wed. 8:30-9:30 AM or Tues. & Thurs. 7:30-8:30 AM. Call 715.390.4540 to register.
- **LWR Mission Quilting:** Tues. at 9 AM.



Christmas Card treasures



Turn old Christmas cards into beautiful keepsake ornaments! It's a fun, simple way to give new life to cards you've received and add a handmade touch to your tree.



What you need:

- Christmas cards
- Scissors
- Glue
- Circle pattern (cut from cardboard or trace around object)
- Hole punch
- Yarn or ribbon
- Glitter (optional)

What you do:

1. Trace a circle onto two Christmas cards.
2. Cut out the circles and glue the backs together.
3. Decorate the edges with glitter or ribbon for extra sparkle.
4. Punch a hole at the top and thread yarn or ribbon through to hang.



Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights.
— James 1:17 (NIV)

D·E·C·E·M·B·E·R						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 Advent 8:00am Worship Service 9:15am Kids of the Kingdom (NO CLASS) 10:30am Worship Service	1 8:30am Strong Bodies 10:00am Staff Meeting 4:30pm Girl Scout Troop 4723 5:00pm Worship & Music Committee Meeting	2 7:30am Strong Bodies 8:00am Men's Breakfast 9:00am LWR Mission Quilting	3 8:30am Strong Bodies 10:30am GriefShare Class 11:30am ZLCW Board Meeting 12:30pm Surviving the Holiday's after a Loss Workshop 5:00pm Joyful Ringers Rehearsal 6:00pm Confirmation Class 6:30pm High School Youth Group	4 7:30am Strong Bodies 10:00am MomCo/KidCo 5:30pm Girl Scout Troop 4717	5 2:00pm Tom Walker-Piano Tuner	6 Advent 2 12:00pm Deb Meier Music Recital 5:00pm Worship Service
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