

Zoar Lutheran Church (LCMC)  
P.O. Box 2098  
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Tofte, MN 55616



To: Box Holder



Notes from Pastor Daren

Wow! The North Shore is beautiful in the fall! As I've watched the leaves turn from the deep greens of summer to the brilliant reds and golds of fall, I've been reminded of James 1:17 and the hymn we will sing at Thanksgiving, *Great is thy Faithfulness*. James reminds us that, " every good gift, every perfect gift, comes from above. These gifts come down from the Father, the creator of the heavenly lights, in whose character there is no change at all." (CEB) and the hymnwriter puts it this way:

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father,  
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;  
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not  
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.



The seasons may change but our God and heavenly father doesn't. And that's Good News! We have a great God whose love and mercy is forever. He sent His son to die for us on a cross 2000 years ago and He provides for our every need today. We see Him at work in the beauty and abundance of creation and when Christian neighbors share His love through word and deed.

I am excited to be a part of a church with a long tradition of service. (We'll be 110 years old in 2016!) This is a community of faith that has dedicated itself to being a place of refuge, in mission for Christ, and a beacon of hope on the North Shore. I am eager to get to know better those members of this community that I haven't met yet. I'd like to invite you back to Zoar to hear the Gospel preached and witness the Body of Christ at work in our friends and members. We've got a lot going on here from contemporary worship to traditional liturgy, from children's ministry in the Birch Grove Bible Club to Sola Confirmation for middle schoolers, and youth and family games nights to adult Bible study all in a great space. Zoar is your community church. Come and be a part of it!

Macedonia Refugee Crisis

Hundreds of thousands of refugees desperate to start new lives in the West have rapidly streamed through Europe this year, overwhelming certain nations along their path. Since Syria's civil war began in the spring of 2011, nearly 4 million Syrians have become refugees. Others are escaping ISIS advances in Iraq and unrest elsewhere in the middle east. It is the largest crisis of its kind in the region since the Second World War.

Many of these men, women, and children have made a difficult sea crossing from Turkey to Greece, then through Macedonia and Serbia to Hungary, and onto Austria and Germany or other northern European nations. However, Hungary has recently closed nearly all border crossings with Serbia, an action creating tension within Serbia and Macedonia.

**Traditional Lutefisk and Ham Dinner**  
**at**  
**Zoar Church**  
**Saturday, November 14th, from 5:00-7:00 p.m.**  
**Good Food! Good Fellowship! Good Music!**  
**handicapped accessible**  
**To Reserve Your Dinner Ticket**  
**Call Zoar Church at 663-7925 or email:**  
**zoarlc@boreal.org**  
**Tickets are only \$15.00 each. . . Reserve yours Today!**

# A Letter from China

*Last spring Ralph and Julie Seelke sent a letter to all of their supporters. Here is a portion of that letter.*

Ralph and I spent the day yesterday visiting Tumen and 3 Corners-the meeting of North Korea, China, and Russia. We hired a van driver who spoke English. Another American teacher and a Korean who teaches German went with us. Tumen is a tourist destination for Chinese people. North Korea is one of the more desolate places we have seen. There is little vegetation because the land as been clear cut for fuel, and there is little development. There were guard houses every 400 meters or so to prevent people from fleeing the country. We were told that the North Korean people are smaller in stature due to malnutrition. We have been impressed with the compassion of the people here for the suffering of the North Korean people. DongSun took me to a bakery that sends its profits for relief. I will eat often there.

Ralph and I just got back from a walk where we see the fields getting ready for planting with fires burning off the old vegetation. The fields are, unfortunately, white with trash which is pushed to the edge. But the fields here are ripe in other ways. People are open to conversations about what our hope in Christ is. This morning in our English fellowship, which can be attended only by people with foreign passports, our student from South Korea was there. He decided to see what Jesus was about. Exciting opportunities.

We are thankful to remember all that we have.

Ralph and Julie



Ralph and Julie Seelke in China

## Zoar and the Lutheran Church of South Sudan

This spring Zoar Church adopted the new Reclaim Hymnal published for Churches associated with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC). With several copies of two older hymnals, the red "Hymns for the Family of God" and the green "Lutheran Book of Worship" (LBW) taking up space in our sanctuary, the leadership team decided that two hymnals would be sufficient for our needs. Members and friends of Zoar who may have donated a copy of the LBW in the past or purchased one in honor of a loved one were encouraged to come and take their donated copy by October 1. Even so, Zoar still has a number of LBWs along with several King James Version (KJV) Bibles no longer in use. What to do? Enter the Lutheran Church of South Sudan (LCSS)! The African country of South Sudan gained its independence from Sudan in 2011, after a tragic and bloody war that claimed more than 2.5 million lives. Grounded in the scripture and inspired by God’s Word, the LCSS is a partner of LCMC, spreading the gospel throughout this new nation. The LCSS is in great need in many ways, but one way Zoar can help immediately is by supplying printed Bibles and hymnals! Working with a church in Iowa which is coordinating a container shipment, Zoar is happy to be shipping two dozen KJV Bibles and five dozen LBWs to help fellow Christians grow in Christ.

ZOAR CHURCH

*A Beacon of Hope on the North Shore*

Jesus in the Gospel of Mark (Part 2)

Lectionary and Sermon Series for October and November

Date	Worship Style	Old Testament	Psalms	Epistle	Gospel	Sermon Title
10/4	Contemporary Worship (With Communion)	Ezekiel 2:1-8	Psalms 123	Colossians 4:2-6	Mark 6:7-13	"Sent Out"
10/11	Traditional Service of the Word (Reclaim)	Jeremiah 11:18-20	Psalms 104:27-35	James 3:13-18	Mark 9:33-42,50	"Salt"
10/18	Contemporary Worship (No Communion)	Amos 5:6-7, 10-15	Psalms 90:12-17	Hebrews 3:12-19	Mark 10:17-31	Trusting in Riches
10/25	Traditional Communion Service (Reclaim)	Jeremiah 31:31-34	Psalms 46	Romans 3:19-28	John 8:31-36	(Reformation Sunday) "Free Indeed"
11/1	Traditional Communion Service (Reclaim)	Isaiah 25:6-9	Psalms 24	Revelation 21:1-6a	John 3:16-17, 14:1-6	(All Saints Day) "All things new"
11/8	Contemporary Worship (No Communion)	2 Chronicles 36:11-16	Psalms 119:9-16	Romans 5:6-11	Mark 12:1-11	"The Vineyard"
11/15	Traditional Service of the Word (Reclaim)	1 Kings 17:8-16	Psalms 146	Hebrews 9:24-28	Mark 12:38-44	"All that we have"
11/22	Contemporary Worship (With Communion)	Daniel 12:1-3	Psalms 16	Hebrews 10:11-25	Mark 13:1-13	"The End"
11/25	Special Mid-Week Service (Wednesday)	Joel 2:21-27	Psalms 126	1 Timothy 2:1-7	Matthew 6:25-33	"A Grateful Heart"
11/29	Contemporary Worship (No Communion)	Jeremiah 33:14-16	Psalms 25:1-10	1 Thess. 3:9-13	Luke 21:25-36	(1st Sunday of Advent) Title TBA

More at [www.zoarchurch.org](http://www.zoarchurch.org)



## Worship

Our worship series focusing on Jesus in the Gospel of Mark continues this October and November punctuated by three special services - Reformation Sunday, All Saints Day, and a special midweek Thanksgiving Service. In addition, the Advent Season begins the last Sunday of November! Ralph and Julie Seelke will be speaking about their mission experience in China on October 4 and Pastor EvaLynn Carlson will be our guest preacher on October 18. Check out the calendar/graph above!

## Fund Raiser for Women, Horses, & Healing

Nancy Gustafson is hosting the Documentarry Movie *Unbranded* as a fund raiser for her organization, Women, Horses, & Healing, offering support to women and young girls, using horses to ride through life's challenges in bringing God’s love, wellness & healing.

The film will be shown at the Marcus Duluth Cinema (downtown by the Duluth Arena) on Monday October 26th at 7:30 p.m. The tickets cost is \$11.00 per person with with 5% going to Women, Horses, & Healing. Seventy tickets are needed in order for the movie to show. Credit Cards will not be charged until the movie hits its threshold. The link for purchasing tickets is: [www.tugg.com/events/47675](http://www.tugg.com/events/47675)

The movie is about four young cowboys hatching an outrageous plot to adopt, train, and ride a string of wild mustangs 3,000 miles from Mexico to Canada through the wildest terrain of the American West. The Audience Award winner at Telluride Mountainfilm and Hot Docs Film Festival, *Unbranded* is a soaring tale of danger and resilience, an emotionally charged odyssey that shines a bright light on the complex plight of our country's wild horses.

My friend, Brian Richards, is the pastor of the International Church of Skopje (ICS) in Skopje, Macedonia. His church is working with Samaritan's Purse at both Macedonia's northern border with Serbia and its southern border with Greece to meet the immediate needs of these people. ICS members and Samaritan's Purse volunteers are distributing women's and children's backpacks, diapers, hygiene items, food, water, and warm clothing. In addition, these Christians are sharing the hope of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Zoar's leadership team voted to find ways we could help as a Christian presence in this international crisis, and Pastor Brian was ecstatic that we might be able to partner with his congregation in their work. He also asked that we pray for continued permission to witness personally to the refugees, and hand out Christian materials including Bibles as muslim organizations are trying to stop this from happening.

The refugee crisis is the designated mission for special offerings during the month of October. You may donate through your regular weekly offering by writing "Refugee Crisis" on the envelope, giving in a special envelope, or directly online through Pastor Brian's sponsor organization, New Mission Systems International (NMSI). He has set up a donations link especially for this crisis at: <https://www.nmsi.org/give/macedonia-refugee-crisis>.

## Sola Confirmation Beginning November First

In the 16th Century reformers like Martin Luther were guided by the conviction that the church of their day had drifted away from the essential, original teachings of Christianity, especially in regard to the forgiveness of sin through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We share with them in their belief that Christ alone saves us by grace alone through faith alone and that the Bible alone is the word of God who alone reigns in glory. These became known as the “solas” of the Reformation (“sola” means alone in latin) and they remain important as the basis of our understanding of scripture, and how to live for Christ today.

The Sola Confirmation class is open to anyone in the community beginning grades 6, 7, 8 or 9. Through Bible based study of the Apostle's Creed, Baptism, Communion, the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer, students gain a deeper understanding of who Jesus is, what Christians mean by "grace", how we live out our faith, and how God's word guides us in our daily lives as we seek to glorify Him. The program, beginning November first, involves a weekly discussion time with Pastor Daren on Sunday afternoon from 3:00-4:00, video presentations to watch at home, and individual student work in one of the four student books. The program is self-paced but designed to run for two years. At the end of the program, Zoar Church recognizes the efforts of confirmation students, and the entire congregation joins in prayer for their continued walk in Christ. If you are interested in having your child participate, contact Pastor Daren at [zoarlc@boreal.org](mailto:zoarlc@boreal.org), or call 663-7925.

## Youth and Family Night Moves to Sunday

Youth and family nights are an opportunity to fellowship with other kids and families in the area in an informal way through playing games, watching movies, fun with Bible skits, and singing praise songs together. Tuesdays seemed like a good idea in the summertime, but with school activities starting up and the days getting shorter, the leadership team thought Sunday afternoons from 4:30 - 6:00 made more sense. Each week is different and you can join in anytime! We welcome everyone in the community to be a part of the fun.

## The Month of October

brings Zoar Church members an opportunity

to participate in our time and talents program,

## “Blessed to be a Blessing”

Watch for the special envelope arriving in

your mail box soon!!

## Birch Grove Bible Club begins November Fourth at the Birch Grove Community School

We are excited to kick off Bible Club this year with “Prepare the Way.” Through use of songs, stories, crafts and games students in grades 1-5 will learn about how God prepared the way for Jesus to enter into this world, and how all of us can prepare the way for others to experience Christ’s love for them. Bible Club will run from 3:15-4:15 each Wednesday through the school year. Throughout the school year other themes like “Jungle Safari” and “Gangway to Galilee” will lead children on a journey through stories and lessons from the Bible. Sponsored by Zoar Church, Bible Club is open to all grade 1-5 students in the area (including both Birch Grove students and homeschooled kids!)

## Designating Your Thrivent Dollars

If you've designated your Thrivent dollars to support the ministry of Zoar Church in the past, we'd like to thank you for your support. As you may know, Thrivent has changed how members may designate "choice dollars" and how "action team" seed money for projects that benefit our church and community may be accessed.

Thrivent Representative Greg Hanson was at Zoar on Sunday, September 27 following our regular worship. He overviewed these changes and walked several Zoar members through the application process for “action teams.” These \$250 opportunities are a great way to help with the community projects or other ministries Zoar spearheads.

If you are a Thrivent member, we'd love to have your continued support of our ministries. If you are interested in designating your "choice dollars" or accessing "action team" seed money and need help doing it, please contact Linda Lamb, Pastor Daren, or Thrivent representative Greg Hanson!

## Operation Shoe Box

Again this year, the Birthday Club women have decided to support the Christmas Operation Shoe Box project led by Samaritan's Purse. The women have participated in this project for the past six years. We invite all of you to join us in this effort. During the month of October a donation box will be set up for the Christmas Shoe Box project in the narthex of our church building. Gift articles can be brought to Zoar Church or gift donations can be mailed directly to Zoar. On Saturday, October 24th we will pack the boxes. Please join us at Zoar Church at 10: 30 a.m. for fellowship as we pack the boxes. Lunch will be served. Later in November the boxes will be shipped to the Samaritan's Purse distribution center where they start their journey to a less fortunate child on Christmas Day. What a thrill it is for each child to be remembered with a Christmas Shoe Box. Here are some suggestions to help you purchase items for the boxes: **TOYS:** Include items that children will immediately embrace such as dolls, toy cars, stuffed animals, kazoos, harmonicas, yo-yos, jump ropes, balls, toys that light up and make noise (with extra batteries). **SCHOOL SUPPLIES:** pens, pencils and sharpeners, crayons, markers, notebooks, paper, solar calculators, coloring and picture books. **NON-LIQUID HYGIENE ITEMS:** toothbrushes, bar soap, combs, washcloths. **ACCESSORIES:** t-shirts, socks, hats, sunglasses, hair clips, jewelry, watches, flashlights (with extra batteries). **A PERSONAL NOTE:** You may enclose a note to the child and a photo of yourself or your family. If you include your name and address, the child may be able to write back.

DO NOT INCLUDE: Used or damaged items; war-related items such as toy guns, knives or military figures; chocolate or food; out-of-date candy; liquids or lotions; medications or vitamins; breakable items such as snow globes or glass containers; aerosol cans.

## Special Offerings

We continue to support a variety of mission efforts, community, national and international. Our recent offerings have been for a local resident with financial needs, the Cook County Community Food Shelf, and Bible Sticks provided to people in the military forces through Faith Comes By Hearing. Earlier this year, we supported Julie and Ralph Seelke (Batorf's daughter) who were on a mission trip to China. We look forward to hearing from them on Oct. 4th. As we respond to current happenings, we turn our focus to the conditions of the refugees fleeing Syria. You will find more about this elsewhere in the newsletter.

