

Zoar Church (LCMC)
PO Box 2098
7239 W. Highway 61
Tofte, MN 55615

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Rediscover
Christ
— in —
Christmas

Sunday Services 9:30 AM
Christmas Eve 4:30 & 7:30 PM



Community
Soup Supper
Wednesdays
Serving from
5:15 – 6:00 PM



Zoar services are in-person, streamed on Facebook, and over 107.9 FM locally.

The Beacon

ZOAR CHURCH PARISH NEWS

A Beacon of Hope on the North Shore



Advent, Christmas and Epiphany Messages

By Pastor Daren Blanck

Two thousand years ago a heavenly messenger delivered an earth shattering message to a poor young Jewish girl in a tiny working class village in Galilee. This visit propelled the young girl, Mary, and her fiance Joseph on a perilous journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem and beyond. Advent is the time when we prepare for our Christmas celebration. This year our advent focus is *The Journey* Mary and Joseph took from Nazareth to Bethlehem. This journey was both an actual physical one as well as a journey of faith and personal growth. My hope is that we too will grow in knowledge and faith as we've persevered through a difficult time this past year.

This year we are lighting oil filled candles on a special advent candle stand purchased in memory of Bev Johnson, a longtime deacon of the congregation. Bev loved to decorate the sanctuary for Christmas and appreciated each season of the church year. For each of the four Sundays of Advent we will light an additional candle on the stand and read God's promises to his people from scripture. On Christmas Eve we light the Christmas Candle from which we all share the light as we sing *Silent Night* together. The advent wreath and Christmas Candle will continue to be lit through January, the season of Epiphany.

Sunday services are at 9:30 AM. Candlelight Christmas Eve services are at **4:30 and 7:30 PM.** Masks and social distancing are encouraged. We'd love to have you join us.

Messages for the New Year

In 2021 I am planning on looking closely at one of the most important letters of the New Testament - Paul's Letter to the Romans. We will also learn about the Cross as a Christian symbol and the depth of its meaning for us during Lent, and the flawed yet faithful King David of the Old Testament. I remain constantly fascinated by how God speaks to us through His Word into the issues of our time. We just have to be listening! Come and join us for worship in the new year. All are welcome!



Thank you members and friends for volunteering your time to decorate Zoar's sanctuary for the Christmas season.



Come spread some Christmas cheer as we sing for our neighbors. We will carol on **Sunday December 19** carpooling or caravanning from Zoar **at Noon** and **Wednesday December 22** following Soup Supper. There is no *Sola Class* on December 22. Michelle and I will lead the singing - no practice required! In the Bible it says "make a joyful noise, it doesn't say you have to be in tune! Hot Chocolate back at church when we are finished.



Global Health Ministries

~December Mission Project~

Throughout the year Zoar Church supports several missions and ministries locally and throughout the world. All of these have some sort of connection to our congregation. The ministry we support in December and January is Global Health Ministries, a program a former Zoar pastor has been with for several years. GHM operates hospitals and clinics throughout Africa and elsewhere in the developing world.

One way we can support GHM is in supplying sheets, bandages, and cloth masks for their clinic operations. These can be made from repurposed bedding we are able to obtain from our local resorts and hotels. We rip queen size flat sheets into the twin size sheets GHM requires and turn the rest into bandages. We use fitted sheets for medical masks and we send the pillow cases we receive directly. Bible Club and Sola Class kids have lots of fun ripping sheets and rolling bandages while congregation members with some sewing abilities sew hems and masks.

We would love for you to join in supporting this ministry on Sundays after church and Wednesdays after Soup Supper in December and January.

Fall Blood Drive

We just had another very successful blood drive on Nov. 15th. Our goal was 25 units of blood and you wonderful donors gave 27!!! You potentially saved 81 lives !!!!!!!!!!! This is such a great opportunity to make a real difference in someone's life and the world. Memorial Blood Centers thanks you and so do I.



Memorial
BLOOD CENTERS

- Polly Erickson, Zoar Deacon

Ruby's Pantry

~ Coming to Birch Grove Monthly ~

Zoar Church will be sponsoring *Ruby's Pantry* food distributions at the Birch Grove Community Center with Mary VanDoren taking the lead in organizing the effort.

In order to hold the event we will need a minimum of **132 people signed up for shares** so even if you don't want a share yourself, you could donate one to someone in need or to a firefighter/EMT or Birch Grove family or whatever strikes your fancy. The cost is \$20 per share. Remaining food will be first given to the Birch Grove Community School and then to our local food shelf.

We are leaning towards the 1st Thursday of the month for distribution. All details are tentative until we have reached the minimum number of shares.

Mary has a large list of supplies that we need if anyone is interested in donating to the start up costs. Supplies will not be purchased until we have a list of 132 people, so signing up is the priority right now! Contact Mary at msbb@boreal.org or text 218-370-1015.



~January Mission Project~

Zoar Church will be supporting *TeachBeyond* for the month of January. *TeachBeyond* recruits and sends Christian educators, administrators, and workers to serve in schools around the globe by working with schools and organizations to provide continuing education to teachers, boards, and school owners. *TeachBeyond* co-owns and supports K-12 schools, English language learning programs and projects. They combine faith and learning in the belief that through the power of God's Holy Spirit, lives and communities will be transformed into Christ's image. Not only do they provide education in the classroom, but they go beyond, into informal settings to teach skills, vocation, and character based on their core values of faith, integrity, holiness, creativity, and a love for people.

Community Soup Suppers

Each Wednesday evening at 5:15 you are invited to Soup Supper. Made at church by different members and friends of the congregation, the soup varies each Wednesday. Following the meal Pastor Daren leads a brief devotion that recaps our Bible Club story, giving Bible Club kids a chance to participate, we sing a song, and we close with a short prayer. Masks are worn by our cooks and servers and recommended but not required for guests. We also recommend that guests follow reasonable social distancing guidelines.



After Birth

By Marsha Hansen

Soft, the snow and dark, the night.

Warm, the glow of heaven's Light.

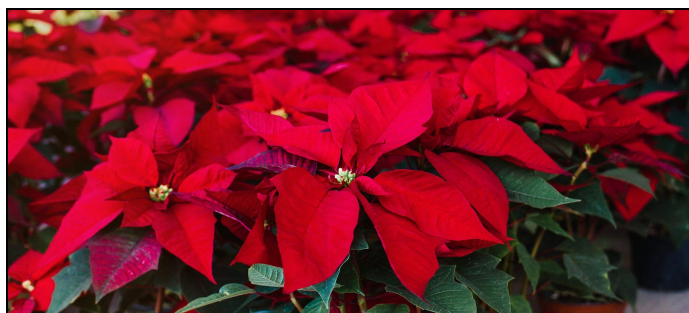
Petal-smooth, the Baby's skin.

Rough and rude, the hay and bin.

Spent, the mother. Bowed, the man,

Resting now in Father's hands.

Awe-struck, they who brought to birth
God's Own Babe, fleshed-out one Earth.



Bible Club and Sola Class

Bible Club meets on Wednesdays at the Birch Grove Community Center at 3:15. This year we are reading Bible stories in the *Read and Learn Bible* and watching a fun take on each of them on the *Veggie Tales* series including *The Christmas Story*, *Gideon*, *Jonah*, *Esther*, *Daniel*, and *Shadrach Meshach and Abednego*. Our themes include God's love for us, trusting in God's presence, and having the confidence He gives us to love others and stand up for good and right. Pastor Daren and teacher Michelle Blanck look forward to a great year of learning with students from the community. Bible Club is open to anyone ages 6-10.

Sola Class meets each Wednesday at 6:15. Our curriculum this year will follow Luther's explanations of the Apostle's Creed and the Lord's Prayer. We are using a workbook series from Sola Publishing, the publishing company of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ, which includes games, in class lessons and Bible reading "homework." We will occasionally watch a *Superbook* episode that augments the lesson. Sola class is for students in grades 5-8. Students completing two years of Sola Class and confessing their faith in Jesus Christ may participate in confirmation.



If you have a child who might be interested in either Bible Club or Sola Class, give Emily a call at 218-663-7925.

Bible Club Kids "Marching in the Light of God" after learning the story of Joshua and the Walls of Jericho.

Poinsettias

Designate a Christmas poinsettia in memory, honor, or in celebration of a loved one. Poinsettias are available for \$20 per plant. The plants may be taken home after the service on Christmas Eve. Contact Emily at the church office for more details! (663-7925)

Bible Study

Sunday Evenings Through Lent

Wednesday Bible study is moving to Sunday evening. Explore topics and texts in greater detail at 4:30 PM each week. Join us in the Gathering Rm.

