

Zoar Church (LCMC)
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Zoar Church Summer Newsletter 2023

Father Baraga's Cross Services

~ Summer Outdoor Worship ~

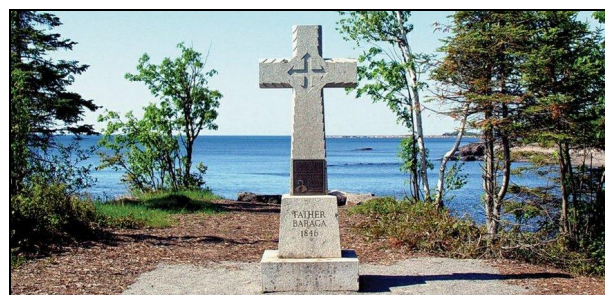
For more than 50 years Zoar Church has hosted inter-denominational early Sunday morning worship "on the rocks" near Father Baraga's Cross in Schroeder. Outdoor worship features scripture reading, a brief message, and worship songs. Pastor Daren Blanck will deliver the messages through July. Pastor Al will be preaching beginning in August. Dave Gustafson leads worship on the guitar. Join us Sundays this summer through Labor Day weekend at 8:00 AM. Adjacent to Father Baraga's Cross & Schroeder Township Park, 56 Baraga Cross Rd, Schroeder, MN 55613.

Community Blood Drive

The Memorial Bloodmobile will be at Zoar on **Monday July 24th from 2:30pm to 6:00pm.**

You can schedule your donation online at <https://www.mbcherohub.club/donor/schedules/drive/schedule/71363>

Or by calling Terri Nelson at (651) 398-7838



Kids Summer Programs

We have exciting opportunities for kids this summer:

Wednesday June 28: Day trip to the *Wolf and International Bear Centers in Ely*. Sign up now to get the best spots 😊. Kids, parents and friends are welcome.

Wednesday July 17th Picnic at Tofte Park - Kids and parent. Food, games and a chance to say thanks and farewell to Pastor Daren and Michelle Blanck.

August (TBA) - Vacation Bible School. Watch for more on our website or Facebook page.

Scholarships available for Christian camps -

To sign up or for more information, contact

Al Alexander at 612-308-2185 or ala010111@gmail.com

Sunday services at 9:30 AM are in-person and streamed on Facebook

Church office hours: Thursday 8am-11am

Pastor's office hours: Wednesday and Thursday mornings

The Beacon

ZOAR CHURCH PARISH NEWS

A Beacon of Hope on the North Shore



Upcoming Messages

By Pastor Daren Blanck

The Way: Following Jesus with Matthew

The gospel of Matthew was one of the first and most highly regarded books of the New Testament for the early church. It records Jesus' life and ministry from the perspective of his disciple, Matthew, a man who'd once been a tax collector for the Romans, spurned by his own people, but chosen by Jesus to start fresh



and follow him. As Matthew began to walk with Jesus he heard Jesus' parables and his sermons, observed his miracles, and ultimately followed him to Jerusalem where he would be crucified. On the way he began to see with new eyes a new vision of God at work in the world and his life was transformed. Join us as we continue to follow Jesus in the book of Matthew this summer. Indoor worship at Zoar Church begins at 9:30 AM every Sunday. Following the service, which lasts just a little over an hour, coffee and snacks are served. We welcome you as you are!

The Way: Following Jesus with Matthew

- 6/18 *Faith and Family* (Matt 8) - Pastor Daren
- 6/25 *The Gospel for the Underdogs* (Matt 9) - Pastor Daren
(Dedicated to Barb Hatanpaa)
- 7/2 *Do Not Fear* (Matt 10) - Pastor Al Alexander (Celebration of Life for Kate Griffith at 1:00 PM)
- 7/9 *Easy* (Matt 11) - Pastor Daren (This Sunday is a Baptism Sunday!)
- 7/16 *Mixed Fruit Basket* (Matt 12) - Pastor Daren (Dedicated to Evalyn Carlson and also Confirmation Sunday.)
- 7/23 *Good Soil* (Matt 13) - Pastor Daren (Pastor Daren's Going Away Luncheon and Open House at 11:30 AM)
- 7/30 *Bread and Water* (Matt 14) - Pastor Daren (Pastor Daren's Final Sunday and Pastor Al's Commissioning)
- 8/6 *Weeding the Garden* (Matt 13) Pastor Al



July 4th at Zoar

Once again this Independence Day Zoar Church will be a part of the festivities in Tofte. We will be manning a hot dog and burgers booth in front of the Firehall, entering Old Red (Our 1947 Ford stake truck) in the parade, and serving pulled chicken sandwiches (jerk barbeque or plain) and coleslaw at the church with the Freedom Day contemporary worship and concert to follow. Dave Gustafson is leading us on guitar and vocals for the **Freedom Day Worship at 7:00pm**, along with Pastor Daren and Michelle Blanck. Pastor Al and Linda Alexander are organizing the **hot dogs and burgers from 11:00am - 3:00pm** and the **chicken sandwiches from 6:00-7:00pm**. Volunteers are much in need to serve. Jim Gregg is driving the truck but he's looking for riders, especially Bible Club Kids who might want to have fun throwing candy during the **parade at 2:00pm**. If you would like to be involved, please call the church office at 218-663-7925 or Pastor Daren at 218-387-4688.

Children's Church - Help Wanted

Zoar Church is looking for the right person to lead Children's Church during our 9:30am Sunday service starting August 6. If you have energy and find joy seeing kids learn, this may be for you! For more information, contact Al Alexander at 612-308-2185 or ala010111@gmail.com

Bible Study

Every Sunday at 6:00pm. in the Gathering Room. An in-depth look at the texts for the day. Everyone welcome.

MN Adult & Teen Challenge

~April Mission Project~

Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge (MnTC) has been working for over 30 years to help teens and adults struggling with drug and alcohol addiction. Their “mission is to assist teens and adults in gaining freedom from chemical addictions and other life controlling problems by addressing their physical, emotional and spiritual needs.” They offer effective and affordable programs throughout Minnesota in the form of long-term, faith-based recovery programs and also short-term licensed treatment programs.

Bethel Church & School, Peru

~May Mission Project~

Bethel Church and school in the jungles of Peru is reaching the children in their tiny community with food, education and spiritual support. Zoar’s gift will be used to repair walls after flooding and ensure all children have healthy lunches each day. Bethel is a sister ministry to the Chichillapi solar heater project Zoar supported previously.



Lutheran Indian Ministries

~ June Mission Project ~

Lutheran Indian Ministries proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ with Native American peoples, disciples Native leaders to share the Gospel with their brothers and sisters, addresses social sufferings in a way that values Native cultures, and envisions a day when all nations walk together in Christian fellowship. Lutheran Indian Ministries serves Native American communities in the Alaskan interior, Hawaii, the Pacific northwest, and the southwestern US.



Starfish Fund

~ July Mission Project ~

In addition to the support that we provide to national and international missions, we also strive to support the needs of our local community. During the month of July, we will be collecting funds for our Starfish Fund. The Starfish Fund is used to support community members in times of need.

Birch Grove Kids’ Meals

~ August Mission Project ~

With limited resources, Birch Grove Community School provides breakfast bars in the morning which, in many cases, keeps children from starting the school day hungry so they are better able to concentrate on learning. BGCS also serves a hot lunch three days a week. The other two days students bring lunch from home. Zoar’s contribution assists BGCS in purchasing breakfast bars and food for children that forget a lunch from home. BGCS appreciates your support in this program.



Pastor Daren and Family Leaving Zoar at the end of July

~ A Letter from Pastor Daren ~

For nearly 8 years it has been my great privilege to serve as your pastor. In that time period I have endeavored weekly to faithfully preach the gospel of Christ crucified. We have studied several books of the Old and New Testaments and we’ve examined topical issues important in our world today. It has been my hope that you have been encouraged and challenged, uplifted and empowered through these messages and that my preaching has, by the power of the Holy Spirit, helped you to grow in your faith.

Zoar Congregation has seen a number of changes these past 8 years. As a congregation we’ve made improvements to our facility including the gathering room and basement renovations, a new roof, technology upgrades, exterior painting, and soon we’ll complete the bell tower project and windows. Since the COVID pandemic we broadcast our services on Facebook Live with improved technology in our worship space. Significantly, we’ve seen a number of key members of our congregation move away or go to their heavenly homes. Each of these losses have been like earthquakes in the life of the church, yet we know this is the normal course of life and we continue to live in the hope of the resurrection.

Though there have been many changes, much good has continued. Zoar has continued its more than 50 year tradition of outdoor worship at Father Baraga’s Cross. The Birch Grove Bible Club remains a strong outreach program for children and young families, and our doors remain open for community events - the blood drive and garden club meet here regularly, we host several funerals each year, and our weekly Soup Suppers are full of energy. Most importantly Zoar remains a Church rooted in the Word of God.

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Celebrating Three Amazing Women of Faith

During this past year we've lost several dear friends and members. In losing them in this life we continue to remember them, their witness to faith and the way that God worked in their lives, as we eagerly await our reunion with them in the life to come.

We are resurrection people: we live in the hope of Christ!

Barb Hatanpaa - June 25



Barbara Hatanpaa went home to Jesus on March 6th, 2023. She was 83. Barb spent most of her life in Schroeder. As her children wrote, "where she became known for her good cooking, fresh-baked bread and warm hospitality." Barb and her husband Jake were active at Zoar: attending Bible Study regularly and always ready

to lend a hand or give a witness. Always listening for the Holy Spirit's guidance in her life, Barb was a shining example of simply following Jesus wherever he led. We will be remembering Barb and her love for Jesus during our regular service at 9:30 on Sunday June 25.

Kate Griffith - July 2



Kate Griffith passed away on Tuesday, November 22, 2022. She was 88. Kate's career included teaching French at William Jewell College in Missouri. She and her late husband, Bill, resided in Schroeder after retiring and were members of Zoar. Kate always had a story to tell during regular Bible Study. For many years she used her gift of

gardening to care for the flower beds around the Cross River Heritage Center and here at the church. We will be celebrating Kate's life along with her family during a special memorial service on Sunday July 2, 2023 at 1 p.m. here in the sanctuary.

Pastor EvaLynn Carlson - July 16



Pastor EvaLynn was reunited with the love of her life, Bear, on November 5th, 2022, "after experiencing one of the most beautiful sunsets the North Shore has seen." She was 77. After a career in education, EvaLynn answered a call to ministry, becoming a career Interim Minister, serving multiple churches across multiple denominations. Zoar Church was privileged to have been her

last parish. EvaLynn was all about building faithful communities and loving people. We will be remembering EvaLynn and her service to God's "Upside Down Kingdom" during our regular service on Sunday July 16.

A Letter from Pastor Daren

(Continued from page 2)



Still, Zoar faces some challenges shared by many churches across the nation. Sunday morning attendance has fallen since before the pandemic and has not fully recovered. Engagement remains low among the vast majority of our membership. Our finances remain strong, yet to continue as a vital congregation, we face the

even more urgent challenge of witnessing to our neighbors anew the joy of the gospel and calling them to worship with us.

In August Michelle, Sophia, and I will be returning to central Minnesota where we will be closer to our immediate family. I will not be serving in congregational ministry but I look forward to preaching occasionally in central Minnesota and remaining involved in creation care ministry. I have also accepted a position teaching at Staples-Motley High School. Sophia will be attending Central Lakes College in Brainerd as a PSEO student. Michelle will be taking a break from teaching to help with our transition back to central Minnesota. We look forward to maintaining our connection with the Tofte/Schroeder community in the summers.

I am excited that Al Alexander is willing to fill in as the interim pastor going forward. I believe his chaplaincy skills and experience and his love for children's ministry are a great fit for Zoar. We will be praying for his ministry here even as we continue to hold up the entire congregation and community in our prayers as you discern God's will for your future and as you continue to be "A Beacon of Hope to the North Shore."

Pastor Daren submitted his letter of resignation on April 30, 2023. It was accepted at the semi-annual meeting. The congregation voted to install Al Alexander as interim pastor while a formal call committee begins the process of calling another LCMC pastor.

You Are invited!



Members and Friends of Zoar Church and Community Members are invited to a **Going Away Luncheon and Open House**

for Pastor Daren, Michelle, Elijah and Sophia on **July 23 at 11:30 AM** in the **Fellowship Hall at Zoar**. Join us in wishing them well in their next adventures!