

A Message from Pastor Gross..

Finally: Something Really New

That which has been is what will be, That which is done is what will be done, And there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which it may be said, "See, this is new"? It has already been in ancient times before us. — Ecclesiastes, First Chapter

King Solomon lamented in his day that "nothing is new under the sun." In a world full of death, trouble, war, corruption, poverty, and cruelty, he seemed ready to welcome something really new. He wanted something that was genuinely brand new, never been done before. But Solomon reigned in the Age of Moses, where the giving of the Law on Sinai was the dominant revelation of God.

Still, Solomon also lived in the Age of Abraham. To the patriarch, and his wife, the matriarch Sarah, was given a promise of something new coming. Her miraculous conception of Isaac in her old age came with a promise of a New Age to Come. The promise hearkened back to a very old prophecy, that the LORD gave to Eve in the Garden of Eden. She was promised that One Seed of a Woman would come to earth, a Baby Who would utterly crush the Serpent's head, forever shattering the old, evil foe's evil plot to destroy us all.

Yet Solomon wouldn't live to see that New Birth, at least, not as an earthly king. With the Saints of old, he would have to watch with eager hope and joy from the spiritual abode around God's Throne in Heaven. Finally, angels descended from God's Glorious Presence to a small village called Bethlehem, the ancestral home of Solomon's father, King David. With all the saints, Solomon would hear of something brand new at last:

"Fear not! For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour, Which is Christ, the LORD."

Now that was shockingly new. The God of Moses, of Abraham & Sarah, Isaac & Rebekah, the LORD God, Who spoke to Moses out of the burning bush, the Same God who spoke to Adam & Eve in Eden, was now born in human flesh! There was the God in Whom Solomon hoped, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger! That was how the Merciful, Living God had fulfilled His promise to Eve, those saints in glory now discovered. That was certainly something brand new when the sun arose over Ephrathah and Jerusalem next morning! Finally, something "new under the sun."

But that was just the start of brand new things. A few months later, when that Baby had become a Child foreigners appeared in David's old birthplace. These had been drawn from the East by the Word of God, seeking that brand new, never-before seen Star in the sky. They followed that light, illuminated by God's Word, 'til they came to where it rested:

"From you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though little among the clans of Judah, shall come forth one Who will rule My People Israel like a Shepherd!"

Wow. A new kind of Shepherd. Not a mere mortal like Solomon's father, King David. Not a morally flawed king of this world. Rather, a Righteous King, Who would rule in true divine justice, over a Kingdom God's power would set up and sustain in Mercy and Love. That was radically new and different from even Solomon's Kingdom. Truly a new King under the sun.

In His own revelation to the Gentile Magi, this "Son of David," one greater than Solomon, brought the New Age to the World. Now was being fulfilled the main promise to Abraham when the Lord separated him from his clan of Chaldeans, saying, "In you, all the families of the earth will be blessed." Gentiles from the East, pilgrims from North, South, and West, would now begin streaming to hear this new King. All who share the Faith of Abraham would now sit down at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

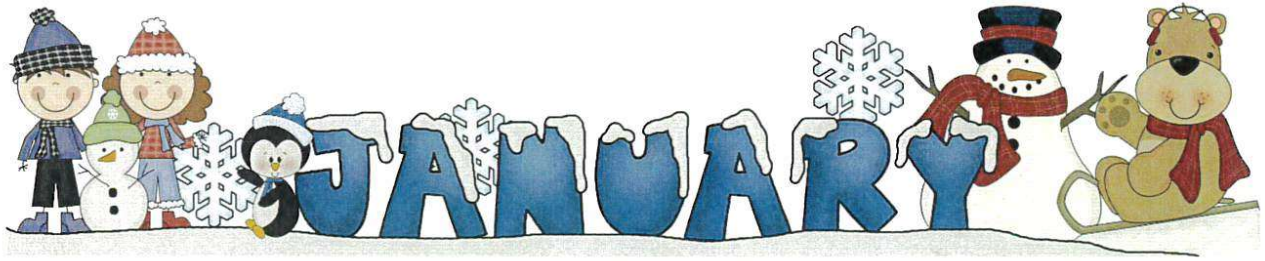
Yet far more new things were now coming to pass. After routing Satan's Kingdom, healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, proclaiming Good News to the poor, this New Man, Jesus Christ, Rabbi from Nazareth, born of a Virgin, drew near to David's City of Zion. On the night He was betrayed, He took Bread, broke it, gave it to His Disciples, and said, "Take, eat. This is My Body." Then He took a Cup, gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you. This is My brand new Will & Testament, in My Blood, shed for you and the many for the forgiveness of all your sins!"

This was a far greater feast than Solomon ever could prepare for Israel, much less the Nations. This was totally brand new: Bread that gave eternal life; Wine that was the Blood of the Lamb of God, poured out to forgive every sin! Certainly something "new under the sun". This led to something else new: the defeat of death itself! This Child of Mary, Whom she laid in a manger, wrapped in swaddling clothes, removed the curse of death the Law of Moses had brought.

Then He ascended on the 40th Day, to proclaim to all the saints in heaven and on earth, "Behold! I make all things new!" Solomon's lament was turned into shouts of joy! "Unto us a Son was born! Unto us a Son was given. And the government is upon His shoulders. Of His Kingdom there will be no end!" A truly Brand New Age had come. Sorrow and death were not our fate! God's Children had only a bright new, happy future, filled with the love of God their Father.

We are privileged to share this Good News with our world. We can shatter their gloom and fears of days to come. We bring Joy to the World, of a world reborn, with a happy future to come. For something truly new has come to earth. A new age, new hope and joy each day, for the new had come in Jesus Christ, our Lord and newborn Savior.

Amen!
Pastor Gross



Vacancy Pastor Jeff Gross

The newly appointed Call Committee met December 4, and reached out to Pastor Jeff Gross from Bethlehem in Petersburg Illinois. **Pastor Gross has agreed to be our vacancy pastor.** Pastor Gross has offered to do Divine Services for Zion at 8:30 A.M. on Sunday mornings. Therefore, Adult Bible Study and Children’s Sunday School will move to 9:45 A.M.. Pastor Gross will not be able to conduct Adult Bible Study personally due to the services at Bethlehem starting at 10:00 A.M. A lay person will conduct Adult Bible Study. The Church Council and Board of Elders have approved the change in time for our Divine Service.

Beginning on January 7, 2024 the new times for our Divine Services (8:30 A.M.) and Sunday School/Adult Bible Study (9:45 A.M.) will take effect. We thank Pastor Gross for adapting his schedule in order to serve Zion.

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Annual Voters’ Assembly Meeting

The Annual meeting of the Voters’ Assembly will be held immediately following the Divine Service on January 14. New members are welcome!! All voters’ should attend.

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Pastor and Cindy’s new address...

Pastor and Cindy’s new address will be 201 E. Church Street, P.O. Box 25, Pleasant Plains. We no longer have a landline phone, so if you wish to talk to us, call Cindy at (217) 899-5963 or Pastor at (217) 899-5967. The target date for the big move is January 15 & 16. As with any move, there will no doubt be some things to manage after that, but we needed to set a date.

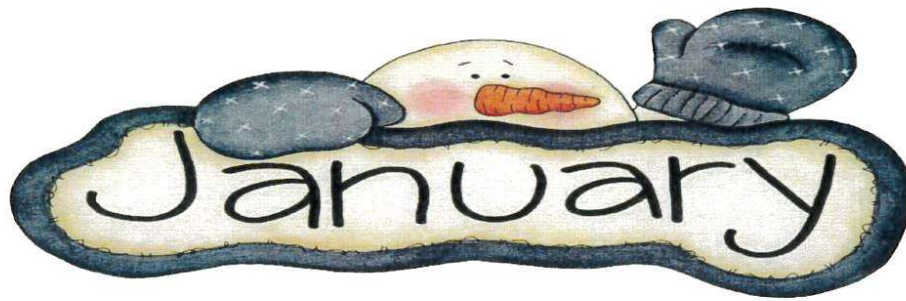
If anyone needs a good sized dresser with mirror, side table to match, or a very nice glass curio/coffee table with brass trim, both are free for the taking. A king sized bed with mattress and headboard will also be available at the parsonage after January 16th along with a couple of entertainment cabinets. Call Cindy if interested.



Effective January 7, 2024

Divine Service 8:30 A.M.

**Sunday School & Adult
Bible Study 9:45 A.M.**



1/1 Sierra Shae Brandt
1/2 David Hecht
1/2 Robin Krone
1/8 Delaina Manuel
1/9 Michael Greene
1/10 Dean Kindhart
1/13 Brooklyn Roemer
1/14 Eric Oschwald
1/15 Ashleigh Sparling
1/15 Colbie Stremsterfer
1/15 David White
1/25 Jon Debowey
1/25 Alberta Kindhart
1/26 Dennis Boesdorfer
1/30 Romen Nolting

1/2 Laura Hecht
1/4 Katryna Tewes
1/8 Shannon Rennecker
1/10 Evan Manker
1/14 Mary Bernoteit
1/15 Patsy Klekamp
1/30 David Hecht
1/30 Dawson Wieland
1/31 Gary Klekamp



1/1 Edward & Marie Balfour

Did you know....

Psalm 118 is the middle chapter of the entire Bible.

Psalm 117, before Psalm 118 is the shortest chapter in the Bible.

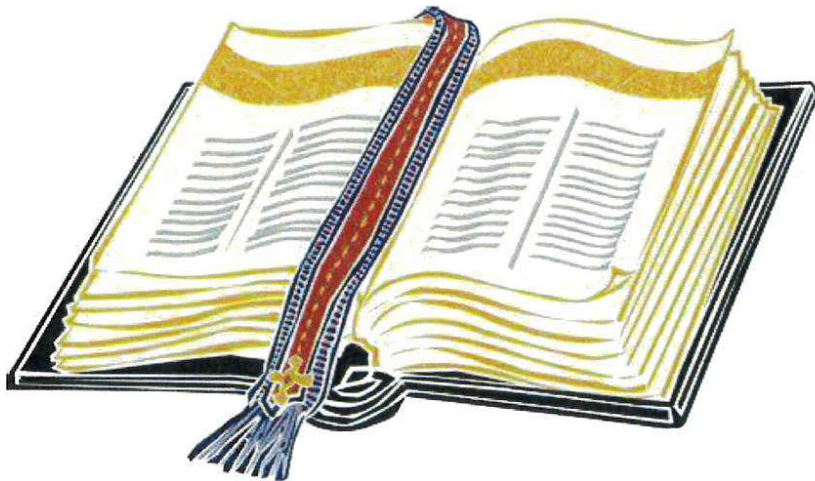
Psalm 119, after Psalm 118 is the longest chapter in the Bible.

The Bible has 594 chapters before Psalm 118 and 594 chapters after Psalm 118.



If you add up all the chapters except Psalm 118, you get a total of 1188 chapters.

1188 or Psalm 118, verse 8, is the middle verse of the entire Bible.

Should the central verse not have an important message?
"It is better take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man."
Psalm 118:8



CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31 Sunday School & Adult Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Divine Service with Communion 10:15 A.M.	1 	2	3	4	5	6
7 Divine Service 8:30 A.M. Sunday School & Adult Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Confirmation Class 6:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 Divine Service with Communion 8:30 A.M. Sunday School & Adult Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Annual Voter's Meeting following Divine Service Confirmation Class 6:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 Divine Service 8:30 A.M. Sunday School & Adult Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Confirmation Class 6:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.	22	23	24	25 Elders 5:30 P.M.	26	27 
28 Divine Service with Communion 8:30 A.M. Sunday School & Adult Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Confirmation Class 6:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.	29	30	31	1		3

Notes: Elder Bob TeRonde

Note new times for Divine Services - 8:30 A.M.
Sunday School and Adult Bible Study 9:45 A.M.

***Zion's Newsletter
January, 2024***

***Zion Lutheran Church
Rev. Jeff Gross, Vacancy Pastor
525 North Cartwright
P.O. Box 167
Pleasant Plains, IL 62677***

(217) 626-1282



***Divine Service 8:30 A.M.
Sunday School 9:45 A.M.
Adult Bible Study 9:45 A.M.***

LCMS

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