

# CONNECTIONS

Website: [ZionsLuth.org](http://ZionsLuth.org) | (719) 846-7786 | Email: [zionsluth@gmail.com](mailto:zionsluth@gmail.com)

## Zion's Worship

*Zion's worship services are at 10 a.m. each Sunday at 510 Pine St., Trinidad, CO.*

### Opportunities

- ✦ First-Sunday Potluck and stewardship study follows worship, Jan. 5.
- ✦ Bible Study is at 1-2:30 p.m. on Wednesdays with the same session repeated at 10 a.m. on Saturdays.
- ✦ Church council meets on Jan. 12.
- ✦ The next 5-Loaves lunch deliveries will be Jan. 25. Volunteers are needed for both prep on Jan. 24 and deliveries on Jan. 25.
- ✦ **Save the Date:** Annual Congregational meeting is Feb. 2.



**A Reconciling in Christ Community**



## Reflections and Hope

By Melanie Moss

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” -- Jeremiah 29:11

For some entering a new year is like a blank slate — a time to reflect on the past and to envision the future. For others it brings a sense of dread and/or fear of the unknown.

In terms of the emergency management world that I grew-up and now work in, it is time to conduct After Action 2024. We do this by reflecting upon the past year's experiences, lessons learned, achievements, and things that could have gone better.

We use this information to move forward with insight to set goals and to actively pursue changes. The interesting thing about this process is that we cannot guarantee that the lesson we learned, or the changes we seek to make will help.

(Continued on page 2)

## Serving Zion's

### Church Council:

Kathy Broman  
Lynn Chase  
Peggy Gustafson  
Norine Hazen  
Cherie Holder  
Mike McNeil  
Julie Morris  
Mark Moss  
Julie Wersal

### Staff:

Lisa Rygiel, Vicar  
Jo Moss, Assistant to Clergy

### Standing Committees:

5 Loaves/Thanksgiving —  
Norine Hazen, lead

Altar Preparation — John  
Rygiel, lead

Angels in Aprons/Birthday  
Cards — Lynn Chase, lead

Building & Grounds — John  
Rygiel, lead

Communion Bread —  
Cherie Holder

Directory — Julie Wersal

Facebook — Sharon  
Sorenson

Flower Guild — Lynn Chase,  
lead

Newsletter & Website — Jo  
Moss

Safety & Security — Mary  
McKenna, lead

Worship & Music/Prayers —  
Lisa Rygiel, lead

Worship Support (ushers,  
lectors, communion) —  
Peggy Gustafson,  
coordinator

*Contact these people at  
ZionsLuth@gmail.com.*

## Reflections...

(Continued from page 1)

I once had a philosophy professor pose the following question to our class. You just left the auto shop where you had new tires put on your car, the brakes, and alignment fixed. You are on the freeway going approximately 75 miles-per-hour when traffic stops, you slam on your breaks confident you will be able to stop, the question is, will the car behind you be able to make that same stop. The point being that there is always an element of blind faith when we enter a new situation. Thus, entering 2025 we enter with that same type of faith.

As we are told in Jeremiah 29:11 God has plans for us, yes, they are unknown and yes, the unknown is scary. There is always the element of freewill that plays into these plans, but still the verse tells us that we will prosper, these plans give us hope for the future. Hope for what 2025 brings.

As we take the time to reflect on the past year let us strive towards forgiveness, peace, love, and hope for the future, and put our faith in Christ Jesus.

### Committee Report Deadlines Set



## Zion's Annual Congregational Meeting Set for Feb. 2

Zion's Annual Congregational Meeting is scheduled for Feb. 2, following worship. As in the past, the meeting will include the election of council members, as well the review of budgets and annual reports. Two members also will be appointed to represent Zion's at the annual Synod Assembly meeting later this year.

Preparing this meeting requires the work of a lot of people, including the church council. In addition, committee chairpersons and leads are reminded that the deadline to submit committee reports is Monday, Jan. 13.

Reports should be submitted to council president Julie Wersal. In addition, anyone interested in serving on the church council, serving on the nominating committee or on the audit committee, should let Julie know.

# January

2025



## Ushers

- 5 Mike McNeil/Cherie Holder
- 12 John Rygiel/Tracy Wahl
- 19 Mary McKenna/T.M. Garner
- 26 Mark & Jo Moss

## Communion Prep/Clean

- 5 Doris Blalock/Kathy Broman
- 12 Mark & Jo Moss
- 19 Mike & Becky McNeil
- 26 Cherie Holder/Mary McKenna

## Lectors

- 5 Mike McNeil
- 12 Tracy Wahl
- 19 T.M. Garner
- 26 Jo Moss

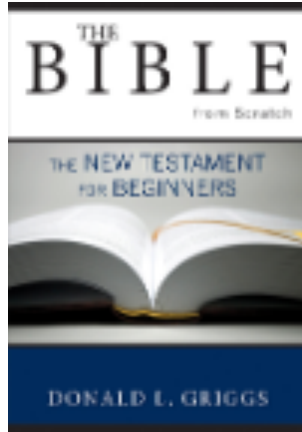
## Worship Assistants

- 5 Julie Wersal
- 12 Peggy Gustafson
- 19 Jo Moss
- 26 Mike McNeil

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
10 am Worship 11:30 pm First Sunday Potluck & Bible Study	Noon — PEO 5:30 pm — AA  <i>EPIPHANY</i>		1 pm Bible Study	11 am Internship Committee		10 am Bible Study
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
10 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship & Church Council	5:30 pm — AA  <i>Committee Reports due to Julie W.</i>		1 pm Bible Study	11 am Internship Committee		10 am Bible Study
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
10 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship 12:30 pm Soup Lunch & Study	Noon — PEO 5:30 pm — AA	<u>Newsletter Deadline</u>	1 pm Bible Study	11 am Internship Committee	9 am 5-Loaves Prep	9:30 am 5- Loaves Del. 10 am Bible Study
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
10 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship 12:30 pm Soup Lunch & Study	5:30 pm — AA		1 pm Bible Study	11 am Internship Committee		

# Two Bible Study Classes Start in January

## The New Testament



Last October, the Rev. Dr. Becky McNeil introduced a weekly Bible study entitled *The Bible from Scratch, the Old Testament for Beginners*, by Donald L. Griggs. Now, after a holiday hiatus, Becky will continue the study, this time with a focus on the New Testament.

This next study uses the book *The Bible from Scratch, The New Testament for Beginners*, a companion book to the one used for the Old Testament study.

The study is offered twice each week. — attend Wednesday or Saturday as fits your schedule. Wednesday classes are from 1-2:30 p.m. in January and February. The same class is repeated from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Saturdays.

The book can be ordered online from many sources, including Amazon and several Christian bookstores websites. Be sure to order the physical book, not the audiobook or E-Book. If you need help finding the book or don't have it in time for the start of the study join us anyway.

If you plan to attend or have questions, let Becky know so that she can have enough copies of additional study materials. All classes will take place in the Fellowship Hall:

- ✦ Week 1: 1-2:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 8 or 10-11:30 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 11
- ✦ Week 2: 1-2:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 15 or 10-11:30 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 12
- ✦ Week 3: 1-2:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 22 or 10-11:30 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 25
- ✦ Week 4: 1-2:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 9 or 10-11:30 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 1
- ✦ Week 5: 1-2:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 5 or 10-11:30 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 8
- ✦ Week 6: 1-2:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 12 or 10-11:30 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 15
- ✦ Week 7: 1-2:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 19 or 10-11:30 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 22
- ✦ Week 8: 1-2:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 26 or 10-11:30 a.m. Saturday, Mar. 1

## Life & Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer

A separate Bible Study, also led by Becky McNeil is slated for Sunday afternoons from Jan. 19 to Feb. 23. This study tackles the life and legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) who was a German pastor, theologian, ecumenist, and peace activist. Bonhoeffer wrote profoundly about Christian faith, community, grace, and ethics, centered on the question, who is Christ for us today?

The study also will endeavor to clarify the life and work of Bonhoeffer, especially during a time when the actors of the recent biopic movie about Bonhoeffer's life have joined scholars, family members, and church leaders in distancing themselves from misuses of the film.

This Bible study will include a Soup Luncheon at 12:30 p.m. followed by the study from 1 to 2 p.m., in the Fellowship Hall.

For more information, contact the Rev. Dr. Becky McNeil at [beckyzmcneil@gmail.com](mailto:beckyzmcneil@gmail.com) or (402) 540-5615.



*Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

## What's Happening in Zion's Lutheran Family?

### *Happy Birthday Wishes:*

Jan. 5: **Elaine Trujillo**

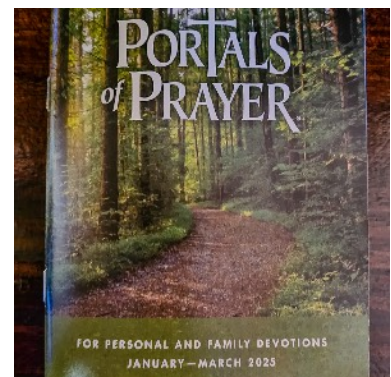
Jan. 17: **Doug Theige**



- ✦ The new flower sign up book is in the back of the Sanctuary, with many Sundays and special worship services throughout the year available for flower sponsors. The recommended donation for flowers is \$35 and donation envelopes are available in the front of the flower book (or donations can be made via Tithe-ly and earmarked for flowers). If you have questions or want to learn more about the flower guild, please contact **Lynn Chase**.
- ✦ It is time to update the Zion's Church Directory. If you have an updated photograph (or need one) or have updated contact information, please contact **Julie Wersal** by Feb. 3.
- ✦ During 2024, Zion's Lutheran's 5-Loaves/Thanksgiving feeding ministry provided meals to 3,835 people. This includes Thanksgiving meals delivered or served as well as monthly lunches. We are grateful to the many people, both those who are part of the Zion's family as well as volunteers from throughout the community. This program is coordinated by **Norine Hazen**.
- ✦ The Zion's 5-Loaves program has a new luncheon coordinator. **Terri Watson**, has agreed to oversee meal preparation the last Friday of each morning and the delivery process on Saturday mornings. If you would like to help with 5-Loaves lunches on either (or both days), let Terri know.
- ✦ First National Bank, Trinidad, sent its heartfelt thanks to Zion's for again this year supporting the bank's Christmas wish lists for shut-ins or senior citizens. For the 18th year, First National Bank has sponsored a giving tree that includes gifts to meet these wishes. Again this year, Zion's helped to fulfill wishes for 15 people.
- ✦ Zion's received Christmas thank you notes from **Jo Moss**, **Connie Pallone**, and **Vicar Lisa Rygiel** for the Christmas cards and monetary gifts that each received this holiday season. For each of them, the messages of gratitude included an appreciation for the generosity of the Zion's family and for the pleasure of serving the congregation.
- ✦ **Terri Watson**, the Marine Corp Toys for Tots liaison in Las Animas County shared her thanks with Zion's for supporting the local program which provided 1,500 local children with toys during the holidays.
- ✦ **Portals of Prayer**: The January to March 2025 Family Devotion booklet Portals of Prayer is available in the Sanctuary and the Fellowship Hall. Large Print copies are in the Fellowship Hall.

### *Save the Date:*

Feb. 2 Join us for First Sunday Potluck,  
then stay for our Annual Congregational meeting.



## Church Council Bits & Pieces: December 2024

By Julie Wersal

Zion's Lutheran church council met for their regular meeting on Sunday, Dec. 8. Vicar Lisa began the meeting with prayer. All reports were approved as submitted.

- Vicar Lisa continues her studies with the last session starting Jan. 27. Mike McNeil will continue to lead the study on Stewardship following our First Sunday Potluck in January. Becky McNeil will lead weekday and Sunday afternoon Bible studies.
- Zion's officially is a Reconciling in Christ church partner, searchable on the Reconciling Works website. Zion's has collected approximately \$400 for our annual RIC donation.
- Vicar Lisa's internship continues through January. The Internship Committee of Julie Wersal, Mike & Becky McNeil, Jo Moss, and Sharon Sorenson meets each week to complete the reviews and paperwork required by the Synod and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary.
- We are looking for volunteers for the Board of Trustees who will oversee the Samuels Trust Fund and for volunteers for the Audit Committee who will be reviewing financial policy and procedures. If you are interested in serving please see Julie Wersal.
- The Budget Committee will meet on Dec. 18. Mike, Mark, and Julie will be reviewing our insurance policy and the changes submitted to us by Church Mutual Insurance. If you are interested in serving on the church council, please let any council member know. The Annual Meeting is scheduled for Feb. 2, 2025.

### Sharing Our Recipes

Zion's is blessed with people of many skills including many good cooks.

So, 2025 newsletters will feature recipes shared by the Zion's family. Maybe this will lead to a cookbook.

We are grateful to **Cherie Holder** for providing the first recipe.

If you have one to share, let Jo Moss know.

#### MINI CHOCOLATE BUNDT CAKES — from Cherie Holder

##### Ingredients

1 chocolate cake mix  
3.9 ounces instant  
chocolate pudding mix  
1/2 cup sugar  
1/2 cup sour cream  
4 eggs  
3/4 cup vegetable oil  
3/4 cup water  
1 teaspoon vanilla

##### Cream Cheese Frosting

12 ounces cream cheese,  
softened  
4 cups powdered sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
1/4 teaspoon salt



##### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. In a large mixing bowl combine all the ingredients and mix for 3 minutes.
3. Spray mini Bundt pan with Baking Joy.
4. Fill each Bundt cake about 1/2 full.
5. Bake at 350 degrees for 16 to 18 minutes. Watch them closely after 16 minutes.
6. Let sit in pan for 5 minutes before turning them out. Cool on a wire cooling rack.

##### Cream Cheese Frosting

1. Combine all ingredients and beat until smooth and creamy.
2. Spoon frosting into a piping bag and pipe frosting over the top of cooled cake.

# Epiphany, the Season for Aha! Moments

By Jo Moss



Epiphany means “manifestation” or “revealing”. Often, when a person suddenly understands something or perhaps comes up with an idea, they claim to have had an epiphany – an Aha! moment.

For Christians, the Epiphany season, which helps us to focus on God’s light, hope, and love through Jesus is an Aha! moment. The church celebrates the Day of Epiphany on Jan. 6, just 12 days after Christmas. During this time, many church liturgies, including those

of the ELCA, recall the story of the magi (found only in Matthew 2:1-10) who came from the east in search of a king born under a star. According to that story the magi met with King Herod in Jerusalem and ascertained that a king was to be born in Bethlehem. Herod instructed them to continue their search for this new king and report back to him.

“When they (the wisemen) saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And, having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.” (Matthew 2:10-12 NRSV)

The wise men were determined not to return to Herod, risked much to pay homage to the king born under a star in Bethlehem. “They came offering their gifts, only to be overcome with joy, not grasping that it was Jesus who provides the greater gift to the world. Aha!” (ELCA, *Living Our Baptism – 5 Gifts of Discipleship*).

The Season of Epiphany runs from Jan 6 until Ash Wednesday, offering Christians a chance to find for their own Aha! moments when, like the magi, we can see what God has in store for us – as individuals, as a congregation, and as people in the community of God.

Traditionally, Zion’s celebrates the Epiphany through “Chalking the door”, which celebrates and physically marks the Epiphany and God’s blessing of our lives and homes. With time the chalk fades. As it does, we let the meaning of the written symbols sink into our hearts to be manifest in our own Aha! moments. We use the letters C, M, B, which have two meanings. They are the initials of the traditional names of the three magi: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. They also abbreviate the Latin words *Christus mansionem benedicat*, “May Christ bless the house.” The “+” signs represent the cross and 2025 is the year. At worship on Sunday, Jan. 5, Vicar Lisa will bless the pieces of chalk with which worshippers can bless their homes. Then, using the blessed chalk, each person marks the lintel of their front door (or front porch) with the following:

“20 + C + M + B + 25”

Then say: **The three Wise Men, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar followed the star of God’s Son who became human two thousand and twenty-five years ago. May Christ bless our home and remain with us throughout the new year. Amen.**

Then pray: **Visit, O blessed Lord, this home with the gladness of your presence. Bless all who live or visit here with the gift of your love; and grant that we may manifest your love to each other and to all whose lives we touch. May we grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of you; guide, comfort, and strengthen us in peace, O Jesus Christ, now and forever. Amen.**

# Angels in Aprons Ministry Volunteers Sought

By Lynn Chase

The Angels in Aprons Ministry began in 2018 when Pastor Andrea thought it would be a wonderful idea to copy what her mom did at her parish in Iowa – cook for others in need. Lanae Rossi (who is a saint with Jesus now) and Lynn Chase volunteered to spearhead the ministry. There were originally 14 *Angels*, but over time (because of moves, etc.) the number dwindled, and we are down to seven volunteers now — Lynn, Cherie Holder, Peggy Gustafson, Jo Moss, Sharon Sorenson, Julie Wersal, and most recently, Jan Everhart.



In 2023, the Angels didn't have any "missions" and in 2024 we didn't have any missions either, mainly because of good health (?) as well as the state of flux Zion's has been involved with this year. The Angels in Aprons Ministry basically gifts food that may be needed for parishioner(s) due to an illness, a surgery, a death, an accident, or any other need.

The food gifts are prepared by volunteers and taken to the kitchen in the Fellowship Hall. The gifts are then either picked up by the recipients or taken to the mission recipient by a member of the Angel Ministry. All the volunteers cheerfully gift their time and food to this ministry.

Due to a resurgence in interest in the Angels in Aprons Ministry, we would like to reintroduce the Ministry in 2025. If you would like to gift your chef's talents, please contact Lynn Chase (coordinator) [cochase07@gmail.com](mailto:cochase07@gmail.com) to sign up. Once a "mission" is identified (either by church staff or a parishioner), Lynn sends out an email to all the volunteers and anyone who is able to help does so. Obviously, not all volunteers can help every time but, in the past, the gifts that are given are abundant and are very much appreciated by the recipients.

## Sanctuary Lighting Updated for Christmas Eve Worship



Christmas Eve candlelight worship seemed more beautiful this year as the dimmed sanctuary took on a special glow as lighted candles were shared.

Until a few days before that worship service, dimmed lights were not an option in the Sanctuary. That was until **John Rygiel** replaced 36 traditional light bulbs in the stained glass ceiling lights with dimmable bulbs. He also updated the electric switch with a dimmer to adjust the ambience.

(A safety footnote, please remember to turn those lights on/off completely when working in the Sanctuary.)



**ReconcilingWorks**  
LUTHERANS FOR FULL PARTICIPATION

**Acknowledgements:** Contributors — Melanie Moss, Jo Moss, Julie Wersal, Cherie Holder, Becky McNeil, Lisa Rygiel, John Rygiel, Norine Hazen, Terri Watson, FNB-Trinidad; ELCA. Photos/Images — Jo Moss, Keith Schweikhard, Sunday & Seasons, ELCA. All rights reserved. Editors — Jo Moss, Lynn Chase.

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