

Connections



Keep the Children (and the Rest of Us) Well

By Julie Morris

We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health and behold trouble!— Jeremiah 8:15

If you look in the oldest parts of most cemeteries, you will see lots of graves of infants and preschoolers. Not that long ago smallpox, measles, whooping cough and flu killed many babies and children before the age of five. It took almost 200 years to stop this with vaccines.

George Washington required his troops at Valley Forge in 1777 to take the smallpox shot saying, "I cannot afford to lose men to a disease." In the 1950s, polio killed or paralyzed thousands of children. Parents kept their kids indoors to protect them from exposure. When the polio vaccine became available, parents and children lined up by the thousands to get it. Polio was eventually eliminated in the United States.

Vaccines for measles, mumps and rubella {MMR} prevented deafness, blindness, death and disability. Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis {DPT} vaccines prevented whooping cough, also known as "cough of 100 days".

Zion's Worship

Come worship with us at 10 a.m. each Sunday, 510 Pine Street, Trinidad CO



First Sunday Potluck

Join us after worship the first Sunday of each month for a potluck in the Fellowship Hall.

5-Loaves

Our food ministry delivers meals to members of the community on the last Saturday of each month. See page 5 for the 2026 schedule.



Church Council

Council meets the second Sunday of each month, immediately after worship.

Reconciling in Christ

Zion's Lutheran is a Reconciling in Christ Community. All are welcome!



Congregational Meeting

Our annual meeting follows worship and the potluck on Feb. 1. At this meeting we will elect church council members.

Keep the Children Well...

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However, with 95-percent of people vaccinated against such diseases, they became so rare that many doctors today have never seen a case of measles or of whooping cough.

We now have vaccines that prevent cervical cancer and liver cancer, shingles, RSV and more. Because of extensive testing and reporting of reactions very few people are injured by vaccines.

Nevertheless, anti-vaccine groups have scared parents away from routine childhood vaccination. They have never heard of or seen a case of polio or measles because when 95% got vaccinated the diseases could not spread. Low rates of vaccination, however, are allowing these highly contagious diseases return.

The U.S. currently has widespread outbreaks of measles and whooping cough. At least three people have died from these preventable diseases. And, unfortunately, the public health systems that track, intervene and prevent disease have been dismantled. Foreign aid, including vaccination programs, have been gutted. Research into new vaccines for TB, HIV, and malaria has stopped. Actions taken by the government may make vaccines available only for those who can afford them.

So, prepare for the return of once eradicated diseases. Avail yourself of current vaccines while insurance pays for them. Encourage parents of young children to get them fully vaccinated and on schedule.

And, pray that new sections of cemeteries won't fill up with babies and little children as in the past.

Julie Morris is a retired Public Health Nurse and former cemetery caretaker



2026 Food Ministry Schedule

Our 5-Loaves meal delivery days are the last Saturday of each month, except Thanksgiving.

January	31	July	25
February	28	August	29
March	28	September	26
April	25	October	31
May	30	November	26
June	27	December	26

About Us:

Church Council:

- ✦ Kathy Broman, financial secretary
- ✦ Norine Hazen
- ✦ Cherie Holder
- ✦ Mary McKenna, secretary
- ✦ Mike McNeil, president
- ✦ Julie Morris
- ✦ Mark Moss, vice president
- ✦ Terri Watson, trust fund
- ✦ Julie Wersal, treasurer

Staff:

The Rev. Lisa Rygiel
Jo Moss, Assistant to the Clergy

Contact Information

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January

2026



	LECTOR	USHERS	COMMUNION
4	Steve Hanson	Steve Hanson & Mark Moss	Jo Moss & Julie Morris
11	Carol Hanson	David Novey & John Rygiel	Steve & Carol Hanson
18	Charlotte Strecker-Baseler	T. M. Garner & Terri Watson	Kathy Humphrey & Vickie Rienks
25	DeWayne Harris	Jody Alford & Cheryl Leef	Kathy Broman & Cherie Holder

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10 am Worship 11:30 am First Sunday Potluck	5:30 pm AA	10 am Worship & Music Committee	10:30 am Book Club	Noon Rotary	5:30 pm Yoga	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
10 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship & Council Mtg.	Noon PTO. 5:30 pm AA		10:30 am Book Club	Noon Rotary	5:30 pm Yoga	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
10 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship Noon New Member Class	5:30 pm AA	National Day of Racial Healing	10:30 am Book Club		5:30 pm Yoga	Newsletter Deadline for February
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
10 am RIC Sunday Worship 11:30 am Fellowship	5:30 pm AA		10:30 am Book Club		7:30 am 5-Loaves Prep 5:30 pm Yoga	8:30 am 5-Loaves Deliveries

Birthday Wishes

1 — Robert Hoenike 5 — Elaine Trujillo
17 — Doug Thiege 31 — John Strecker-Baseler

What's Happening in Zion's Lutheran Family?

- ❖ The First United Methodist Church has invited us to join them for prayer and coffee at 10:30 a.m. each Thursday at Kangaroo Coffee, located in the Marketplace on Commercial Street.
- ❖ If you are seeking a Bible Study, Pastor Lisa Jo Bezner will be leading a study of Romans on Thursday beginning January 8 in Trinidad at 6 pm at the UMC. See Pastor Lisa Rygiel for the Reading Schedule. Also, consider being part of Zion's Lutherans Wednesday Book Club, which begins Jan. 7 in the Fellowship Hall. The current book study is *What if Jesus was Serious – A Visual Guide to the Teachings of Jesus We Love to Ignore*, by Pr. Skye Jethani. This book looks at Jesus' teachings from the Sermon on the Mount and applies them to today's cultural realities. See page 5 for details.



- ❖ Our Christmas Eve worship was graced by several visitors, including one family that selected Zion's and Trinidad as a central location for people traveling from various directions. We are grateful to **Mark Nelson** for the beautiful music that made the candlelight service so very meaningful.
- ❖ We are grateful **Jeff Wahl** (photo at left) for the inspiring Blue Christmas worship service. Jeff is a solo guitarist and storyteller. **Tracy Wahl**, Jeff's cousin, coordinated Jeff's role in this worship.
- ❖ Thank you to everyone who helped brighten the holidays for people of all ages and walks of life. We were able to provide gifts for senior citizens through First National Bank's Giving Tree, toys for children through the Marine Corps *Toys for Tots* program (coordinated locally by our own **Terri Watson**), and gifts of warm clothing and blankets for the unhoused (coordinated by **Pr. Lisa**).
- ❖ The Church Council sends thanks to **Sherry Gartside** for the handmade Christmas ornaments.
- ❖ Altar Flowers: The 2026 Flower Chart is on the robing room door in the Sanctuary. Sign up for your selected day and identify the purpose. A donation of \$35 is requested.
- ❖ **Pr. Lisa** will have a class for new members at noon on Sunday, Jan. 18. If you are interested in becoming a member of Zion's, please let her know.
- ❖ Jo Moss sends thanks to Zion's for the special Christmas gift from the congregation.
- ❖ Due to ongoing economic woes and cutbacks to support programs such as SNAP, we have seen the 2026 requests for 5-Loaves meals increase by almost 15 percent. This means we will need additional assistance in preparing and delivering meals. If you can help, please let **Norine Hazen**, **Terri Watson**, or **Jo Moss** know.
- ❖ Special thanks to **John Rygiel** for completing much needed repairs to the hymn board at the front of the Sanctuary.



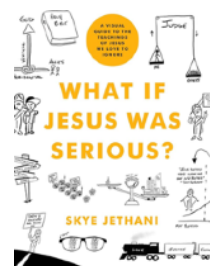
Wednesday Book Club Asks, "What if Jesus was Serious?"

By Pastor Lisa Rygiel

I will be leading a new Wednesday Book Club beginning with *What if Jesus was Serious – A Visual Guide to the Teachings of Jesus We Love to Ignore*, by Pr. Skye Jethani.

The gist of the book is that if we compare Jesus' teachings to a quick survey of how Christians live, it becomes apparent that we often ignore much of what he says.

Skye Jethani exposes this problem through a deeper examination of Christ's ethical teaching: the Sermon on the Mount. Each brief reflection will challenge us to rethink assumptions and apply Jesus' teachings to today's cultural realities.



Here is what Amazon says about it: Daily Devotions for People Who Hate Daily Devotions...Let's face it, a lot of Christian resources can feel cheesy, out-of-touch, and a little boring. But when Skye Jethani started doodling and writing up some of his thoughts about God, his Twitter and email list blew up.

What If Jesus Was Serious? is a compilation of all-new reflections (and hand-drawn doodles) from Skye. He takes a look at some of Jesus' most demanding teachings in the Sermon on the Mount and pushes us to ask whether we're really hearing what Christ is saying.

The visual component of the book makes it memorable and enjoyable to read, and Skye's incisive reflections make it worthwhile for any Christian. If you've traditionally been dissatisfied with Christian devotional resources but love to learn about Jesus and think deeply, this book was written for you.

Skye Jethani is an author, speaker, consultant, and pastor. He also cohosts The Holy Post podcast, a weekly show that blends cultural and theological insights with comical conversation.

Zion's Annual Meeting is Feb. 1 Church Council Candidates Sought



Zion's Lutheran Church will conduct its Annual Congregational Meeting at 11:30 a.m. on Feb. 1, 2026, in the Fellowship Hall

following worship and our First Sunday Potluck. Participation is in person and via Zoom, with the online link to be provided the week prior to the meeting.

This is an annual event where we report on finances, resources, as well as committee and congregational activities.

Voting members will be asked to review and vote on the budget for 2026 and to elect church council members. Our church council consists of 9 members, of which 3 come up for election each year, and serve 3-year terms.

If there is a partial-term vacancy, we will vote for someone to finish out that term, as well. This year we will vote for three members to serve 3-year terms.

Voting members are defined as confirmed members of Zion's Lutheran who have communed in this congregation and made a contribution of record in the current or preceding calendar year. Voting members will receive copies of the proposed budget and agenda prior to the meeting via email.

Paper copies also will be available on Jan. 25. If you have any questions regarding this meeting, please contact Council President Mike McNeil or Pastor Lisa.

If you are interested in, or want more information about, serving on the church council, feel free to talk to any of our current council members.

For Whom Do We Pray? A Look at Our Prayer List

By Jo Moss

The last page of each Sunday bulletin includes a list of people, programs, and concerns that are part of our weekly prayers. The final paragraph of this list contains ongoing prayers that we offer each week. Many of those have been listed for several years and are part of our “glocal” (global and local) prayers.

Wal-Reat: An ELCA Sudanese Pastor Wal Reat, met Pastor Andrea in seminary. As a child, Wal-Reat was conscripted into the army. Eventually, he made it to a refugee camp and, through immigration resettlement, moved to Minnesota where, he met Lutherans who loved him and his family. Wal attended seminary before returning to Sudan as a minister in the new Lutheran Church (more info in Zion's Nov. 2021 newsletter and in *Living Lutheran*, at <https://www.livinglutheran.org/2015/08/refugee-ordination/>).

ACTS: The acronym ACTS stands for Assisting our Community Through Service and is a partnership of area faith-based organizations and community members who seek to steward resources to those in need. It is supported by Trinidad Ministerial Alliance with Zion's its leading contributor. ACTS provides utility assistance and partners with two local programs to help feed people. It also works with Pastor Clay and the Way Ministry to help the unhoused (see the Zion's June 2022 newsletter).

The Way: Pastor Clay and Mary Mason started “The Way” ministry in Trinidad almost eight years ago, to serve the underserved, especially unhoused people who deal with addiction. As Pastor Clay once described, “those who our society deems of lesser value.” In August 2018, The Way prepared and served its first Sunday lunch in Cimino Park, a routine that has continued (weather permitting, and now at Zion's) ever since. Pastor Clay and Mary, along with Lana Geier and



ACTS, not only feed people in the community, but also work to help people find homes, jobs, and a future. In the process, they also spread the word of God through both ministries and actions. (See the Zion's September 2023 newsletter.)

Prison Ministry: The New Beginnings prison congregation is a Lutheran mission church holding regular in-person worship for all incarcerated who wish to join. In 2023, Pr. Samm Melton-Hill began a yoked call with Highlands Lutheran Church in North Denver to serve New Beginnings, which has various aspects of worship and stewardship. It also is restarting the card ministry with Zion's and is asking our congregation to bring blank greeting cards and stationary that the inmates can use to write cards and letters to those they love and miss. There is a container to collect them on the table in the Fellowship Hall. Donations for postage also are appreciated. (See the Zion's May 2023 newsletter.)

Jangaru: Now known as the Minna Hope Foundation, this mission project originated in Nigeria for the people of Jangaru. Its focus was providing reliable potable water as well as educational opportunities. Tony and Jodi Riley are familiar to Zion's as regular volunteers for our 5-Loaves ministry and played an integral role working with the Spanish Peak Mission to provide these and other vital services in Nigeria. While the area currently is dangerous due to the political climate, this mission continues to serve the area with funds and special projects. (See the Zion's November 2023 newsletter.)

Previous editions of the Zion's newsletter can be found on our website.

Zion's Welcomes New Member David Novey

David Novey became the newest member of Zion's Lutheran by Faith Acclamation during worship on Sunday, Dec. 14.

Born and reared in Fort Worth, new member David worked for American Airlines for "20 years, 7 months, 3 weeks, and 1 day" before retiring. His mother is 91 and he has three younger sisters.

David grew up in the Methodist church and played baseball at TCU for four years. He has been a musician most of his adult life.

David says he is glad to be living in Colorado and is grateful to have found "my church."



Living Lutheran.Org Offers Free Access

ELCA's LivingLutheran.org is now live and offers numerous features customizable to individual interests and needs. Best of all, there is no charge. Features include:

- Easy-to-access format.
- Personalized, custom dashboard that prioritizes the stories and topics that interest you.
- Access to members-only content.
- E-news email delivery options to get the information you want, both online and in your inbox.

Check it out at: <https://www.livinglutheran.org/>.

Sharing Our Recipes: Pretzel Strawberry Jello Salad

From Stephen & Carol Hanson

(This recipe is from Stephen Hanson's mother Maridene Lundstrom)

Ingredients

2-2/3 Cups Crushed Pretzels
 3 Tbs Sugar
 3/4 Cup Butter
 8 oz. Cream Cheese
 1 Cup Cool Whip
 2, 3 oz. Packages Strawberry Jello
 2, 10 oz. Packages Frozen Strawberries
 1 Cup Sugar



Directions

Cream 3 tablespoons sugar with butter. Add pretzels and press into a 13 x 9" baking pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes. Cool..Mix cream cheese with 1 Cup sugar. Add the Cool Whip and spread over the crust. Let stand until firm. Dissolve Jello in 3 Cups boiling water. Add frozen strawberries. Pour over cheese mixture until Jello gets slightly thickened. Refrigerate until set.

Jan. 25 We Celebrate Diversity as God's Children

This month, Zion's will join Reconciling in Christ (RIC) congregations throughout the ELCA with a special RIC Sunday Worship, on Jan. 25. The theme this year is *Celebrating Diversity as God's Children*.

As part of the worship, Zion's will use the form and some of the language adapted from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* © Augsburg Fortress Publishers. *The Lord's Prayer* and the *Creed/Statement of Faith* are from the Expanded Language Liturgy: Sighs too deep for Words.

The RIC planning team explained, "Because it is rooted in the teachings and ministry of Jesus, the work of full inclusion is something that God's beloved children can celebrate. No hiding in the shadows for us! Let us dance in the light of God's love, singing songs of liberation, justice, and inclusion, even when it is uncomfortable or difficult."

As the Rev. Keats Miles-Wallace reminds us, "Jesus calls us to be better together, to love our siblings in Christ with even more depth, compassion, and wild abandon than ever before. Jesus calls us to love our black, brown, and other-hued siblings. Jesus calls us to love those whose bodies appear or function



differently than we might expect. Jesus calls us to appreciate the stunning beauty of the spectrum of neurodivergent minds and the unique ways that contribute to the world around them."

"Being Reconciling isn't just about saying 'yes' to queer folks," says Pr. Miles-Wallace. "It's about saying 'yes' to God's insistence that our community reflect the

wide welcome of Christ. It's about refusing to settle for the world's divisions, and instead, learning to live as a people who actually practice reconciliation.

"This is the time to double down, dear ones, not for clout or to stick it to the man, but because it is what Jesus calls us to do together, as queer folk, as reconciling churches, as allies, because holding together in the light of Christ is the way that we will survive no matter what comes our way, no matter what shadow of death we might find ourselves in. The way we follow Jesus together is not by fighting harder than our enemies, but by loving bolder than they can imagine."

On RIC Sunday, Zion's also will collect a special love offering as part of our ongoing support for and commitment to RIC.

Epiphany Blessing — Chalking the Doorway

As described in Pr. Lisa's E-formation on Dec. 31, a way to observe Epiphany is by "Chalking the Doorway" to celebrate and physically mark the occasion of the Epiphany and of God's blessings for our lives and homes. With time the chalk will fade. As it does, we let the meaning of the written symbols sink into the depths of our hearts and manifest in our words and actions. Information for the chalking can be found on Zion's website and on the back page of the Jan. 4 bulletin (also found on our webpage).

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