

Connections

A Reconciling in Christ Community



A Vicious Cycle

Editor's Note: This beautiful article was submitted by a member of the Zion's congregation. Respecting the privacy of the family featured in this story and to focus upon the important message not the individuals involved, we have changed their names.

I know three people who have died because of alcohol this week alone. That sounds too nice. To be more direct, alcohol killed them because of their own unwillingness to stop drinking. One more person that I know is on the verge of death due to alcohol.

One of the three was only 44. All were deaths of accumulation -- a slow buildup of toxins over many years until finally the organs give out -- liver, kidneys, pancreas and perhaps sepsis and suffocation.

One of these people was my cousin. For this story, I'll call him Carl. He was 51. He was in the hospital for more than a month as his kidneys and then his pancreas failed.

Finally, just hours before he died, he made the decision to be disconnected from life support. That was in early August. When he first went into the hospital it looked like this was going to be the outcome. And I asked for prayers for him at church.

And, I said, keep me in your prayers too. Because I am so angry that he let it get to this point.

Continued on Page 2

Zion's Worship

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



Summer Suppers

Join us Wednesday, Sept. 9, for our final Summer Supper of the year. Supper, fellowship, and special activities begin at 5:30 p.m.

5-Loaves

Our food ministry delivers meals to the community the last Saturday of each month. That's Sept. 25 & 26 this month.



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!



God's Work Our Hands 2026

Our special God's Work Our Hands Worship will be Sunday, Sept. 13, followed by our GWOH projects. See page 5 for details.

Vicious Cycle...

Continued from Page 1

He knew he was predisposed.

His grandfather was an alcoholic. His father. His older brother abused alcohol. His uncle. Another male cousin had multiple DUIs and car accidents. I got a DUI in college -- as did another cousin.

If ever the writing was on the wall -- that was the case with Carl. It was baked into our DNA. Not deterministic but a big part of the family story.

Carl has two daughters. We all knew he had a problem. And I for one just kept hoping he would change. Carl used to say he was like my little brother. But, if that was the case, I wasn't a very good older sibling. When I was confronted with the problem, my response was la la la. Please make it go away. It was his life.

But what a waste. He had a Ph.D., learned sign language in high school, and had a loving family. He was incredibly smart. At least in most things.

I think a lot of people know about the effects alcohol can have on the liver, but not so many know about the impact on other organs. Sepsis takes over and fluid starts to accumulate. Eventually the lungs fill with fluid and the person essentially drowns.

My cousin Doug, Carl's brother, died at age 20 while swimming with his friends. He drowned in a river. It's likely that Doug was drunk...that they were all drunk. Their dad eventually died at 65 from non-Hodgkins lymphoma, but he was also an alcoholic.

I started drinking at 14. Coors light.

The dances at the local Catholic Church were known as a good place to get sloppy drunk. And pretty much every weekend someone would use a fake ID to load up on alcohol as we drove around in one friend's old van. It's a miracle that we didn't kill someone or end up dead ourselves. When I got married in my early thirties, we had an open bar. I don't remember much about the night except that I drank a lot.

My spouse's father was an alcoholic...he would get drunk and beat his mom until she was left bleeding on the floor.

It made my spouse understandably nervous when I drank even just a little. I didn't completely stop drinking until decades later when I started taking medication for another disorder.

I had gotten divorced and reunited with my high school sweetheart, the one with whom I drank in high school.

Now they don't drink at all. Neither do I. They had their own epiphany with alcohol after first one stepdad and then another was an alcoholic. The first one emotionally abused them, especially after drinking. The second one refused to stop drinking even when he faced an ultimatum.

That person now is in a hospital bed, organs barely functioning, just waiting to take their last breath.

He will die any day.

So, I ask this: How many more will die before we all stop pretending that drinking too much is funny?

That somehow, it's appropriate to laugh it off, like it's no big deal, instead of saying the truth, which is that alcohol is destroying lives, families, communities and each of us?

How long? Please stop. Now.



Closing note: If you are concerned about a drinking problem for you or a loved one, do not wait. Take action. The problem is likely to get worse, not better. Reach out to your family physician, a counselor, or one of many resources online.

September

2026

	ASSISTANT	LECTOR	USHER	COMMUNION
6	Mike McNeil	Lorna Hassard	Jody Alford & Lorna Hassard	Lisa & John Rygiel
13	Steve Hanson	T.M. Garner	John Rygiel & Terri Watson	T.M. Garner & Julie Morris
20	Jo Moss	John Strecker-Baseler	Steve Hanson & Mark Moss	Carol Hanson & Jo Moss
27	Julie Wersal	Erin Ogletree	T.M. Garner & Tracy Wahl	Jody Alford & Erin Ogletree

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
10 am Worship 11:30 am First Sunday Potluck	5:30 pm AA	5:30-7 pm Dementia Support Group	5:30 pm Summer Supper & Fellowship			
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
10 am GWOH Sunday 11:30 am Fellowship & Council Mtg.	Noon PEO 5:30 pm AA	10:30 am Bible Book Club				
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
10 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship	5:30 pm AA	10:30 am Bible Book Club	Newsletter Deadline for September		8:30 am 5-Loaves Prep	8:30 am 5-Loaves Deliveries
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
10 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship	5:30 pm AA	10:30 am Bible Book Club				

Birthday Wishes

6 — T.M. Garner

10 — Margaret Gumke

16 — Elizabeth Reilley

28 — Carol Hanson

29 — Skylar Jones

30 — Jo Moss

What's Happening in Zion's Lutheran Family?



- ❖ A mama bear dubbed "Katharina" (Martin Luther's wife's name) and her three cubs took up temporary residence in the pine tree between the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall, prompting safety reminders and an appreciation of the wonders of God's works for all of creation.
- ❖ Zion's was well represented at the Cuchara Art Show 2026, including **Steve & Carol Hanson, Robert Hoenike, Cheryl Leef,** and **Ena Sroat.** Also, **Tracy Wahl's** partner **Leif Lathrop** was August's featured artist at Corazon Gallery.

- ❖ On Aug. 23, Zion's was honored to welcome four new members to our faith family. Joining by baptism were **Crystal Hulet** and **Mark Lara.** Joining by faith acclamation were **Rose Golla** and **Debbie Spearman.** We are grateful for their presence, involvement in our church family, and the joy they bring to Zion's each time we gather.



- ❖ In case you missed it in August **Pr. Lisa** shared two separate messages about life planning the first featured details from Luther Seminary regarding wills and the second was from ELCA regarding investment opportunities and options. You can access this information on the Zion's website using the "News" tab, or use the QR codes at right.
- ❖ Zion's Bible Book Group adult learning opportunity resumes at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 15 in the Fellowship Hall with "What if Jesus was Serious about Prayer".
- ❖ Thank you to those who contributed to Team Rubicon as part of our August 5th Sunday offering, to support ongoing wildfire recovery efforts from the Aspen Acres fire.

Wills



Scan Me

Investments



SCAN ME

About Us:

Church Council:

- ✦ Kathy Broman, financial secretary
- ✦ Steve Hanson
- ✦ Norine Hazen
- ✦ 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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Final Summer Supper & Fellowship is Sept. 9

This summer, Zion's has been host for a monthly Summer Supper filled with fellowship, food, and fun. The first supper was June 10 and featured hotdogs and side dishes as well as a rousing game of Pictionary, courtesy of Julie Wersal. More than 20 people attended.

The number of participants increased in July when, along with pizza, attendees enjoyed an evening of art and music, courtesy of Carol & Steve Hanson. In August, we ate hamburgers, salads, and desserts and played the game Guesstures, courtesy of Terri Watson. The final Summer Supper of 2026 is at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 9, in the Fellowship Hall. Come join us.



God's Work Our Hands Sunday is Sept. 13



"God's work. Our Hands." is the ELCA annual day of service, this year taking place Sept. 13. It is an opportunity for ELCA congregations to celebrate who we are as a church, engaging in projects and activities that explore our convictions as Lutherans -- that all life in Jesus flows from a living, daring confidence in God's grace.

At Zion's, GWOH is a year-round commitment reflected in our ongoing projects: Through the garage sale, spearheaded by Julie

Wersal, Zion's raised funds to purchase for the soup kitchen the \$2,400 replacement freezer which was delivered there on Aug. 27. GWOH is reflected each month in our 5-Loaves program.

Zion's also has an ongoing GWOH program, coordinated by Terri Watson, for transportation & support for members needing assistance, particularly travel to out-of-town medical appointments. In mid-August, Zion's stepped up to help The Way ministry serve lunch to the unhoused when an ongoing medical condition sidelined Pr. Clay Mason's ability to do so.

In September, Zion's will add two special projects. Both projects begin Sunday, Sept. 13, with a special GWOH worship at Zion's followed either by a sing-along at the Legacy or a gathering in the Fellowship Hall to assemble hygiene kits for the unhoused. Zion's is collecting items to make 30-35 kits (see list below for items that still are needed for the hygiene kits). Please put items in box in the Fellowship Hall.

Basic Hygiene Kit (contents will be put in 1-gallon zipper bags)

- Shampoo
- Body Soap
- Razors (men and women)
- Combs
- Small Deodorant
- Alcohol-free bottles of hand sanitizer
- Band-Aids
- Chapstick

For Feminine Hygiene Kits add small packages of: Tampons, Full-Size & Mini Pads, and Feminine Wipes

Around Town: Invitations From Our Community

There are several opportunities in September of which the people of Zion's have been invited.

Main Street Live & PEO Partner for *Secret Comedy of Women*

Trinidad's PEO Chapter J is sponsoring the Main Street Live performance *The Secret Comedy of Women*. A two-actor comedy about growing up, growing old and laughing at life as women.

Main Street Live advertises that the show has something for everyone, and enough to keep you laughing all night.

The show runs Sept. 11-13 and 18-20. Friday shows begin at 7 p.m., and the shows on Saturday and Sunday start at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$21 for adults and \$17 for seniors and students.

In addition, visit the PEO booth at the shows to learn more about PEO and the organization's scholarships for women.

Eighth Annual Make Art Fair

Trinidad's 8th Annual Make Art Fair will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 5, on the grounds of the Trinidad History Museum. Zion's member Jody Alford is Vice President of the Arts Council of Trinidad, and with husband, Rich Alford worked with the Arts Council of Trinidad to create this free event, which last year attracted 150 participants.

The Make Art Fair offers projects for everyone. This year's activities include: two beading

activities, tie dye, batik, pour art, rock/mandala painting, needle felting, modeling clay, and more.

Many of members of our church family have attended and/or shared their talents for this day of fun. It is a come and go event, and people can take part in as many art projects as they desire.

For more information, talk to Jody Alford.

First United Methodist Church Bible Study

Pr. Lisa Jo Bezner, at First United Methodist Church Raton & Trinidad, invited Zion's family to join FUMC for a study of Proverbs.

The study continues throughout September. It begins at 6 p.m. on Wednesdays at FUMC in Raton and 6 p.m. Thursdays at FUMC on Broom Street in Trinidad.

Pr. Bezner points to the writings of Theologian Amy Plantinga Pauw, who wrote that Proverbs, while often overlooked, is surprisingly relevant for Christian faith today. It can speak to those who seek meaning and purpose in an uncertain world and encourage us to look for God's presence in human life. Proverbs affirms that true wisdom, whatever its human source, comes from God.

Syllabus:

- Week 1 (Sept. 2-3): Chapters 1-7 – Introduction and the search for wisdom and life.
- Week 2 (Sept. 9-10): Chapters 8-9 – Wisdom at Creation and Woman Wisdom's transformation into Jesus by the early church.
- Week 3 (Sept. 16-17): Chapters 16-17 – Wisdom proverbs and troublesome theology.
- Week 4 (Sept. 23-24): Chapters 16-22:16 – Deeper into the wisdom proverbs with a focus on pride and humility.
- Week 5 (Sept. 30-Oct. 1): Chapters 22:17-31 – Words of the wise, political wisdom and the limits of wisdom.
- Week 6 (Oct. 14-15): (if needed)

For more information contact Pr. Bezner at fumcratonpastor@gmail.com.



Sharing Our Recipes: Shrooms

From Mary McKenna

Ingredients

- 2-3 Pounds Fresh Mushrooms
- 1 Medium Red Onion (cut into 1" pieces)
- 3 Cloves of Elephant Garlic (chopped)
- 1 Tablespoon Black Pepper
- 1 Cup Red Wine
- 1 Can Beef Consommé
- 1 Beef Bullion Cube
- 1/4 Pound of Butter



Directions

- Clean mushrooms and cut off stems
- Bring mushrooms to a boil in 2 Cups of Water and Can of Consommé
- Add Onion, Garlic, Pepper, Butter, Wine, and Bullion Cube
- Cover and Simmer for 2 to 3 hours.

Enjoy!

The Zion's Fellowship Hall has Beautiful New Floor



The Fellowship Hall has a new look, as the worn, stained carpet has been replaced with a wood plank floor. The flooring brightens the hall, is easier to keep clean, and eliminates ongoing costs of trying to maintain the old carpet.

The church council studied flooring options throughout the summer, before identifying materials and a budget to make it possible. On Aug. 2, at a special called congregational meeting, members approved the

transfer of funds to cover project costs and by the middle of August John Rygiel and Terri Watson went to work removing the old carpet and moving furniture in preparation for the flooring contractors.

To reduce costs, John Rygiel picked up the flooring materials in Pueblo. By Sunday Aug. 23, the contractors had completed their work, and Pr. Lisa blessed the floor that Sunday, just in time for Zion's to celebrate our new members. The following week, John returned to the Fellowship Hall to replace baseboards and add other finishing touches.

We are grateful to everyone who helped make this project possible.

Acknowledgements: Contributors — Pr. Lisa Rygiel, Pr. Lisa Jo Bezner, Tracy Wahl, Jody Alford, Mary McKenna, ELCA, PEO.

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Editorial Team — Jo Moss, Mark Moss, Erin Ogletree

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Council Updates: August

Zion's Lutheran Church Council

Members present

The regular meeting of the Zion's church council was brought to order at 11:35 a.m. on Aug. 9 by Mike McNeil. All members, except Julie Morris, were present. Julie Wersal joined online.

Opening prayer was offered by Mike McNeil.

Reports

Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Trust Fund — All reports were reviewed and approved. Including refunds from Safeway and disposition of extra food they ordered in error. Reports also noted that ACTS has been dissolved. Remaining monies designated for the ACTS mission will be divided among human service non-profits approximately \$375 monthly.

Food Ministry — The August 5-Loaves menu was reviewed. Reviews of additional foods have been positive, especially larger boxed items of cereal and pasta, etc.

Pastor —

- A. Rose Golla, Debbie Spearman, Mark Lara, and Crystal Hulet will be joining Zion's on Aug. 23. The new members' class will be on Aug. 21.
- B. Sept. 6, Zion's will celebrate Creation in Christ Sunday.
- C. Sept. 13 is God's Work Our Hands Sunday. We will have a devotional with communion followed by special projects. One group will sing at the Legacy, another will assemble hygiene kits for the unhoused. Pastor Lisa will contact "Keep Trinidad Safe" to verify needs.
- D. Adult learning will resume Tuesday Sept. 15 at 10:30 a.m. using "What if Jesus was Serious about Prayer".
- E. 5th Sunday Blessing donation for August will be designated for those who lost homes, etc. in the Aspen Fire. Mark will follow up with

Melanie Moss to identify the appropriate entities for donations.

- F. First Call Retreat will be held Oct. 1-3 in Park City, Utah.
- G. Pastor will be out of town the weekend of Oct. 10-11 to attend her sister in law's memorial service in Pennsylvania. John and Charlotte Strecker-Baseler have graciously agreed to fill the pulpit.



Old Business

- A. Flooring schedule is slightly delayed due to Home Depot not having the product available. Pr. Lisa is following up on the special trailer needed to haul products. We will need to be flexible as we move through this time as the work is completed.
- B. Pr. Lisa contract 2026-2027 was reviewed including vacation days. Currently leave days are 19 with four Sundays included. A brief discussion of the Mutual Ministry committee followed. Acting as the Pastor preceptor. The contract was initialed by Pr. Lisa with Mike McNeil acting as signatory for council.

New Business

- A. Council is looking at grants to help with the repair to our historic building as otherwise costs are significant.
- B. Post ACTS of giving monies to Keep Trinidad Safe was discussed.
- C. Council is seeking more information regarding insurance providers. Church Mutual is the current provider.

The Meeting adjourned at 12:46 p.m.

-Submitted by Council Secretary Mary McKenna