

Gathered, Empowered, Sent



GOOD NEWS from Zion's

a quarterly update highlighting God's work in and through our congregation

September 2022

Dear Members and Friends of Zion's:

It's been several months since I've shared GOOD NEWS stories with you, and I can think of no better way to kick off the beginning of a new program year than by celebrating the work God has been doing in and through our congregation over the summer months.

Much of the summer was spent preparing for our annual **Back to School Blessings** event, which equips families from Jonestown and Fredericksburg Elementary Schools with everything they need to begin the new school year in style.

This year, 62 students signed up to participate; each received new shoes, new socks and underwear, new jeans and a back-to-school outfit, new school supplies; they then had the

opportunity to select a variety of gently used clothing, jackets, and shoes. It's been neat to witness how this event has grown and morphed over the years, and how our community has come to know Zion's as "that church that does that back-to-school thing". When people ask, on the Jonestown Facebook group, where they can donate clothing, I get to witness non-members pointing them to our congregation, affirming "this congregation will distribute the clothing/supplies right back into our community". In this way, this ministry not only blesses



those who receive items, but is also a blessing to our broader community by providing a way for neighbors to give to neighbors.

Our other big outreach project this summer has been working **on blankets for Lutheran World Relief (LWR)**; these blankets will be blessed in worship on Sunday, October 2, and then taken to the LWR warehouse in Maryland for distribution to people in crisis throughout the world. While we don't know exactly where *these* blankets will end up, we know that, in 2021, a total of 122,400 LWR quilts were distributed worldwide, with many blankets going to

Ukraine, the country of Georgia, Peru, El Salvador, and Tanzania. So far, thirty different people have worked together to cut, stitch, iron, design, and knot these blankets, from age four and up!

Zion's helped to **send six of our congregation's children to Lutheran camps** this summer, and had two families attend Family Camp. Each of the campers reports that they had a great time, got to experience new adventures (like canoeing in the Adirondacks, riding a horse, sleeping on the top bunk for the first time, serving as camp intern, and making fire pots!) and learned about the beauty and gift of God's creation, and our call to love and serve all people. Your generosity makes these camp scholarships possible and supports the Lutheran Camping Corporation as a partner in ministry.





Our congregation **is committed to raising up leaders in Christ's church**; we help to do this through our regular support of the Lutheran Camping Corporation (many deacons and pastors report that they first heard God's call to public ministry at camp) and the ELCA's Young Adults in Global Mission program (another ministry where future pastors and deacons often hear God's call). Because of ongoing global COVID-19 concerns, we were unable to sponsor a Young Adult in Global Mission this year, and instead financially supported the **ELCA's Fund for Leaders**, which provides seminary scholarships for promising students training for rostered ministry. In August we had the privilege of hosting

Rosalie Brunner, a Fund for Leader Scholarship Recipient, who shared with us what this scholarship means, and how it allows her to focus on her studies, and, eventually, accept a call anywhere in the United States.



We've enjoyed many opportunities to gather over the past months, with familiar favorites like **Getting to Know You Time** and a **Rejoicing Spirits reunion picnic** and worship service, as well as new opportunities like the inaugural **"Babies, Bibles and Bagels"** gathering for families with infants through preschool-aged children, and the **Spiritual Census Cottage Meetings**. Each of these gatherings remind us of the gift it is to be in

Christian community with one another, through all of life's highs and lows, and how important *relationships* are to the body of Christ. If you're looking to get to know the congregation better, I encourage you to check out these opportunities for fellowship. We especially hope you'll make plans to attend one of the Cottage Meetings, as our Council really wants to hear from you.



We've also welcomed **new members**, celebrated a **baptism**, and approved a **sanctuary restoration and renovation** project that has been in the works for a long time. It is an exciting time to be the Church at Zion's as we give thanks for all that God has provided for us, participate in God's mission of loving and serving, and look forward, in hope, to the future God is calling us into.

I invite you to read the **"News You Can Use"** publication for important upcoming dates and invitations as we begin a new year of choirs, Sunday School, confirmation, and special events. As we sang often during the pandemic, "I am the Church, you are the Church, we are the Church together...the Church is not a building, the Church is not a steeple, the Church is not a resting place...the Church is the people!" We can't do the ministry we do without your help, and we are so grateful for your participation, partnership, and financial support.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for generous spirits, giving hearts, and desire to grow and serve. I look forward to all that is yet to come.

In hope, *Pastor Caitlin Kurtz*