

Zion Ev. Lutheran Church

Prairie Whispers Newsletter

June 2026
Volume 6, Issue 6



Hang on every Word He says

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" ⁴¹ "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, ⁴² but few things are needed – or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:38-42)

There is a great temptation in the life of a passionate Christian, who longs to follow after Christ in all they say and do, to feel guilty about sitting around. There is a sense of guilt that overwhelms a pastor almost to the point of paralysis when he does not have a detailed to-do list of all the things he must get done during the week. The same sense of guilt overtakes a layperson at times as well when a pastor speaks passionately about reaching out to the lost, telling the neighbor about Christ, and the only spiritual thing they have done all week is read the meditations.

Now, there is a proper place for contrition when it comes to the sin of idleness. If the Lord has placed before us work and we have procrastinated, delayed or just plain said "no" we truly have a good reason to be cut to the heart. But passion for the work Christ assigns to us must begin, and can only proceed, if we first have a passion FOR Christ who assigns it.

In the book of Luke, we come across this wonderful character sketch of two sisters who both are firm believers in Jesus. Martha is taken with the fact that the Lord is in her house. Oh, what must he think if we do not prepare the best for him! So she rushes from room to room, cleaning, cooking, and ordering her servants around in a frantic preparation for the Lord.

But Mary, in comparison, forgets all such preparation and sits at the feet of Jesus to hear from him. Indeed, Mary, from a human point of view, is the picture of laziness. But not so from Jesus's point of view. He says to Martha of her sister, *"You are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed – or indeed only one. Mary*

PASTOR PAUL MEITNER

PSMEITNER@GMAIL.COM

(612) 647-7130

LOUISE KIECKER

ZIONWINTHROP@GMAIL.COM

(507) 828-2756

ZION EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

608 HIGHLAND DR. W

PO BOX C

WINTHROP MN 55396

(507) 647-5582

ZIONWINTHROP.COM

VBS, Church Picnic

Vacation Bible School (VBS) will be on Wednesday, June 3 from 6-8 pm for those potty trained through 6th grade completed at Zion Fellowship Hall.

The church picnic will be Sunday, June 7 at **10 am** (please note time change from normal summer schedule) at God's Treasures Childcare Learning Center. A potluck dinner will follow the service.

Bring a dish to pass, your own plates and utensils and a lawn chair.

Hot dogs and beverages will be provided.

"Tangled"



Come one and all to enjoy this Disney film on June 4.

has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

There is one thing needful – that is the Gospel. From Mary's point of view, who can think about such things as cleaning and cooking when our Savior sits before us to tell us of our salvation? Would not have David, Abraham, and Moses give their right arm to sit at the feet of Jesus? This is why Jesus commends Mary for her passion in listening to the Word. For Jesus himself says, *"The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as the ransom for many."*

Here is where Christianity stands all man-made religions on their head. The primary goal of Christianity is not for the Christian to impress Jesus by our piety, but for the Christian to receive what Jesus in his love has purchased for us through his sufferings, death and resurrection. Indeed, it is no accident that only Mary understood what was about to happen on Holy Week and thus anointed Jesus for his burial. She listened. She believed. She trusted that he was the Resurrection and the Life – not just for her and her sister and her brother Lazarus, but for all humanity.

So, when you see the pastor hunched over his desk over his Bible, be of good cheer. He is receiving the gift of Jesus which he shall share with you. And when you hunch over your meditations, be of good cheer, for Christ himself is fanning the flames of your passion by bringing you into contact with the fire of his love. Hang on every word of Jesus – for he must change your heart and life before you can be his tool of transformation in the lives of others.

Amen.

Community Event: "Tangled"

Film being shown June 4 at dusk for the community!

Invite your friends and neighbors for a community event at Zion for the showing of the Disney movie *Tangled*, on Thursday, June 4 at around 7:30 pm in the parking lot. There will be free hot dogs and popcorn in the Fellowship Hall, along with the opportunity to pick up a free Thrivent t-shirt.

Donations will be accepted for hot dogs, buns, ketchup, mustard, chips and bottles of water. Please drop off all donations by noon on June 4.

Free-will monetary donations will be accepted that night. Some costs have been covered by Thrivent Action Team cards.

Prairie Lutheran School

Celebrating a Season of Growth and Talents

As the school year draws to a close, our campus has been buzzing with excitement and activity. The final weeks of school gave us a wonderful opportunity to showcase the incredible academic, theatrical, and athletic abilities of our student body. It is a joy to witness this display of gifts, and we pray that God will use these talents to bless our students' futures.



Academic Achievements

Our students finished the year strong by completing the NWEA national testing. Mr. Seehafer was very pleased with the individual growth demonstrated by many of our students, as well as the progress made by the entire student body.

We also celebrate the students who stepped up to participate in the annual spelling bee this year. Additionally, Mr. Seehafer administered the Math Meet testing throughout the school year. Congratulations to Hannah DeDeyne for earning the high score in the 7th-8th grade division, and to Leander Lund for taking the top spot in the 5th-6th grade division!

Hands-On Learning & Agriculture

The 5th and 6th graders enjoyed a fantastic, hands-on learning experience at Ag Day, held on and near the Farm Fest grounds. Students visited local sheep, pig, and beef operations to learn about livestock production. They also attended educational breakout sessions focused on ATV safety, general farm safety, and large equipment safety.

Storybook Theater Success

Our gym was transformed into an underwater kingdom when Storybook Theater came to school to present *The Little Mermaid*. Marion Matzke took the stage as the lead, showcasing her excellent acting skills and beautiful singing voice as Pearl. Harley Kaskinen perfectly utilized his "dad voice" to play King Triton, while Sylvia Nachreiner's natural gentleness shined through in her role as Queen Scylla. Liam Kiecker played Caspian, capturing hearts as the story's main heartthrob. Congratulations to the entire cast on a spectacular performance!

Athletic Highlights

On the fields and courts, our students stayed incredibly active. The entire student body traveled to Redwood Falls to compete and participate in various track and field events. In team sports, our 7th and 8th graders put on a great performance and played well in the coed softball tournament hosted by Mount Olive in Mankato. Finally, we want to recognize our two school golfers who joined forces with the GFW team this spring and enjoyed a wonderful season on the greens. (Continued on Page 4)

Ladies Guild

All ladies of the congregation are invited to a Ladies Guild meeting on Monday evening, June 8 at 6:30 pm.

God's beautiful plan for was presented at Zion on May 2 by Becca Backhaus, who shared her story of God's beautiful plan of adoption. She grew up in AZ and knew she was adopted. She attended MLC, was a student teacher of Barb Groehler's in Goodhue and married Rev. C. Backhaus.

After accepting a call to Cross of Christ Lutheran Church in Las Cruces, NM they sent a family picture to the church so people would know them when they arrived. Many people said Becca looked like their last pastor's wife. After contacts, anxiousness, time, and most of all, God's comforting passages, Becca learned that this former pastor's wife was her birth mother.

Becca encouraged the approximately 30 attendees to think of their own stories, struggles, and challenges, and be encouraged with go-to Bible passages to share those stories with others, so that with the Holy Spirit's help, they might win more souls for Christ and show Jesus' love.

Dessert was served by ladies and plants, provided by Karen Doehling, were given away. A freewill offering was taken to help defray Becca's plane fare back to her home in Austin, TX.

LWMS

The International Convention is "Cast Out Your Nets" and will be held in Madison, WI, June 25-28, 2026. To register, go to lwms.org. Information is available from the website or from our reporter, Janet Lind.

Fall Rally will be October 3, 2026 hosted by St. Paul's Lutheran, Jordan, MN. Watch for updates and more information.

eGiving

Go to zionwinthrop.com, look under Give and follow the links or text the dollar amount to 844-999-0914 or through the Vanco Mobile app on your cell phone.

Flowers for the Altar

Would you like to put flowers on the altar in 2026? If so, they would be appreciated.

Please talk to the people in charge for that month. Their names are on the flower chart, which is located on the wall across from the offices. The monthly information can also be found on the back of the monthly calendar.

(PLS Continued from Page 3)

Graduation

We have come to a close of the 2025-2026 school year with the graduation of six eighth graders. Anika Beckendorf, Lewis Hahn, Harley Kaskinen, Liam Kiecker, Marion Matzke, Sylvia Nachreiner. God's blessings on their upcoming high school years.

Thank you to our teachers, parents, and students for making this a memorable and blessed end to the school year!

Mr. Macord Johnson

God's Treasures assigned teacher

God's Treasures Childcare Learning Center received an assignment from Martin Luther College to have Paige Mathiowetz from Morgan to be the three-year old's teacher this fall. We welcome Paige to our ministry.

Paige is engaged and getting married this summer. Stay tuned for a date for her installation.

Vacation service times

In August, Pastor Steve Bauer of Immanuel, Gibbon is taking vacation, and our Pastor Meitner will be covering for him.

On August 2 and 9, our service times will be at 9:30 am with no bible class prior. Immanuel will have an 8 am worship time those days.

May Council Meeting

Zion Ev. Lutheran Church Council Meeting May 21, 2026

Meeting was called to order by Ken Opitz

Additions to the agenda

Pastor request to take a class

PLS financial support

Secretary's Minutes

Motion to approve April 16, 2026 meeting minutes as written

Motion carried

Pastor's Report

Jake and Sophie completed Bible Information Class and will

join the congregation after their wedding in June
 Started Food, Fire, and Fellowship
 Sunday School is wrapped up
 Youth did a lot of cleaning at Zion and God's Treasures
 Paige Mathiowetz assigned to God's Treasures as 3 yr old teacher
 June 3rd VBS and June 4th community movie night
 Vicki K. is retiring from organist
 Sending out a letter to encourage supporting ministries as we go into the summer where offerings typically decrease.

Treasurer's Report
 3 months behind paying PLS, approximately \$50,000
 Report approved subject to audit

Board of Education
 PLS
 Sewer pipe needs to be replaced under floor and out to street, estimated to cost \$50,000
 Janitor position filled
 No cook applicants yet

MVL
 Called Sarah Allee for computer apps
 Graduation on Sunday

Scholarships
 MLC, Seth Schmidt \$1,750 from Bierman Trust money that MLC will match

Board of Trustees
 Water fountain- Ken will look at it
 Windows are refinished and bell tower door is painted
 May 9th Youth did a lot of cleaning
 Air Conditioning is repaired and ready to use
 Sidewalk project won't start until July
 Boiler system has a recall on it, B&R Plumbing knows about it, repair has to be done by end of June

Evangelism Committee
 Need truck driver and people for float for Winthrop Parade
 Community Movie "Tangled" June 4th
 Looking for food donations
 Have a 24 ft screen to project movie on
 Work with St. Paul's, Arlington for fair booth again this summer

New Business
 Zion is \$50,000 behind in payments to PLS. June is the end of PLS fiscal year
 Motion to look into Hirtha Witt interest to pay PLS
 Motion carried
 Call a special voters meeting on May 31st to seek authorization to use Hirtha Witt trust fund interest to pay PLS
 Pastor is requesting to take a class on 1&2 Thessalonians, the class will cost \$175
 Motion to accept pastor's request and pay for the class

Lutheran Pioneers

Registration is now open for the Girls Camp 2026 on June 11-13 at Flandreau State Park, New Ulm. It has a "Stay Sweet" theme based on Galatians 5:22-23. Register at www.facebook.com/events/1590087661708732/ or go to <https://forms.gle/rQmFgIpRnznV9L4g6>

This year's schedule is:

June 18: 2 pm Hummingbird Park, Historical Museum, Henderson

June 18: Sunbeam Day Camp, St. Peter Lutheran Church

July 3: Patriotic Pie Social, Gibbon City Park

July 26-August 1: Girls' National Camp, Crivitz, WI

OneCall

A few statistics about our OneCall system where we can send phone calls, emails and text messages to update members:

-Since 12/28/2010, we have sent out 565 alerts with a current list of 158 members

-59,484 attempts, re-dialing buys and no-answers to deliver 49,689 attempts.

-OneCall has saved us 991 hours and 24 minutes!

OWLS

Meeting

The local MN Valley Chapter 13 OWLS (Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors) will be meeting at 3 pm at Sweet Haven Tonics, 116 North Minnesota Street, New Ulm, on Mon., June 9.

Enjoy a "Spritzer and Art Tour" with Bethany Professor Jason Jaspersen, as he shares his vision of Christian art (cost covered by Thrivent Action Team grant).

If you have not already signed up, contact Myron Fluegge at 507-359-2424 or email: flueggemtj@hotmail.com by Wed., noon, June 4 for a count.

Mowing the Lawn

Volunteers are needed for weekly lawn mowing at Zion. The church's lawn mower is available for use.

Contact Charlie Hoffman for questions, and how to access the shed where the lawnmower is stored.



using undesignated memorials
Motion carried
Next Meeting is Thursday June 18

Lindsey Johnson, Council Secretary

Food, Fire & Fellowship

The very popular Food, Fire & Fellowship potluck bible study, that takes place on the patio behind the Parsonage, is studying the longest Psalm in the Bible: Psalm 119.

There will be no FFF Bible Study on June 23, as Pastor will be in St. Paul attending a class, nor will there be a study on July 14. Planned end date is July 21.

Potluck and Fellowship begins at 5 pm with the Bible Study starting at 6 pm. As always, the Fellowship Hall will be the back-up site for weather concerns.

April Profit and Loss

Revenue	
General Fund Income	\$21,745.45
Expenditures	
<u>Building Upkeep:</u>	
Electricity	442.99
Heat	1,144.84
Insurance	1,518.80
Maint. & Repair	118.09
Parsonage Maint. & Repair	298.05
Umbrella Insurance	<u>50.00</u>
Total Building Upkeep	\$3,572.77
<u>Christian Education:</u>	
Confirmation	89.25
Mediations	237.50
MVLHS	2,550.00
Prairie Lutheran	<u>15,063.08</u>
Total Christian Education	\$17,939.83
<u>Facilities Expenses:</u>	
Copier, Cmptr purch/Maint	976.51
Office Supplies	170.86
Postage & Fees	78.00
Telephone, Internet	76.27

Waste Disposal	65.20
Website	<u>25.00</u>
Total Facilities Expense	\$1,391.84
<u>For Our Worship:</u>	
Advertising	20.00
Bulletins	217.26
Communion supplies	112.33
Flowers	63.58
Guest Organist	408.76
Music	447.10
Offering Envelopes & Fees	<u>35.32</u>
Total For Our Worship	\$1,304.35
<u>Missions</u>	
CMO	\$3,334.00
<u>Those Who Serve Us:</u>	
Janitorial fees	131.25
Organist fees	420.00
Secretary's wage (in full)	2,146.00
Housing	1,153.87
Pastor Housing Equity	90.30
Pastor Health Insurance	3,094.00
Pastor Mileage	639.59
Pastor Pension	3,396.00
Pastor Salary with SECA Reim.	3,332.53
Payroll Expenses	59.00
Soc Sec./Medi Match Tax Expense	168.88
Workman's Comp.	<u>\$122.80</u>
Total Those Who Serve Us	\$14,754.22
Total General Expenses:	\$42,297.01
Net Operating Revenue	-\$20,551.56
<u>Trust Fund Transfer</u>	<u>\$8,063.08</u>
Net Operating Revenue	-\$12,488.48*

(*Note: A cash basis is used for our accounting, meaning that this report only shows cash in and cash out. It does not show what we owe, as we are behind on PLS payments. Please pray for Zion.)

June Events

Schedule a visit with Pastor at home or an office visit. Call him at church or his cell 612-418-7130.

June 2- 10:30 am God's Treasures (GT) Chapel

5 pm Food, Fire & Fellowship Potluck Bible Study

June 3- 6-8 pm Vacation Bible School

June 4- 7:30 pm *Tangled* movie, free hot dog meal, popcorn

June 5 & 6-Pastor performing wedding at Walker, MN

June 7- 10 am Service at God's Treasures

Potluck picnic following service. Bring dish to pass, your

Fellowship Hall Rental

To rent the Fellowship Hall and kitchen for family events, please contact Louise at the office for availability. It is on a first-come, first-serve basis, with church events, like funerals taking precedence.

Cost per day is \$35 for members, payable in advance and signing a form with the rules. Non-members must have council approval and have a different rate.

You Tube updates

In May, it was reported that the most watched video in April was Confirmation Sunday, April 26.

We did four new uploads, gaining two new subscribers for 331 views and 3,492 minutes watched.

The 331 views were 70% more than March while the watch time of 58.2 hours was 68% more than the same times in March.

Thrivent Choice

Thrivent has changed their timing of the availability of Thrivent Choice Dollars.

All Thrivent Choice Dollars that you earn during the year are available immediately, instead by having to be earned throughout the year.

Offering Counters needed

Volunteers to count the weekly offering are needed for July to December. The job has been simplified and training is available. Signups are on the table in the Narthex.

Meditations

The Daily Devotional, *Meditations*, that is dated May 21 to August 29, 2026 is available on the Ushers Table in the Narthex.

Both regular and large-print versions are available.

own plates, utensils, lawn chair. Hot dogs, beverages provided

June 8- 6:30 pm Ladies Guild meeting

June 9 & 10- Minnesota District Convention at Martin Luther College

June 9- 5 pm – Food, Fire & Fellowship Potluck Bible Study

June 11- 6:30 pm God's Treasures Board Meeting

June 13- 10 am Bayside Manor, Gaylord

June 14- 4 pm Wedding Rehearsal

June 15- 11 am Wedding of Felicity Johnson and Oliver Trebesch

June 15-17- Pastor attending class in St. Paul

June 18- Deadline for July Calendar/Newsletter

6 pm Elders meet

7 pm Council meets

June 23- 10:30 am GT Chapel

5-7 pm Food, Fire & Fellowship Potluck Bible Study

June 24- Treasure Haus Day in New Ulm -help needed!

June 30- 10:30 am GT Chapel

5-7 pm Food, Fire & Fellowship Potluck Bible Study

Pastor will be taking vacation days on July 1-4.

Office hours during June, July and part of August will be at 1 pm on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays.

MLC Help Wanted

Martin Luther College is accepting applications:

Full-time Executive Director of Mission Advancement. This role helps connect donor support to the preparation of future pastors, teachers, and staff ministers.

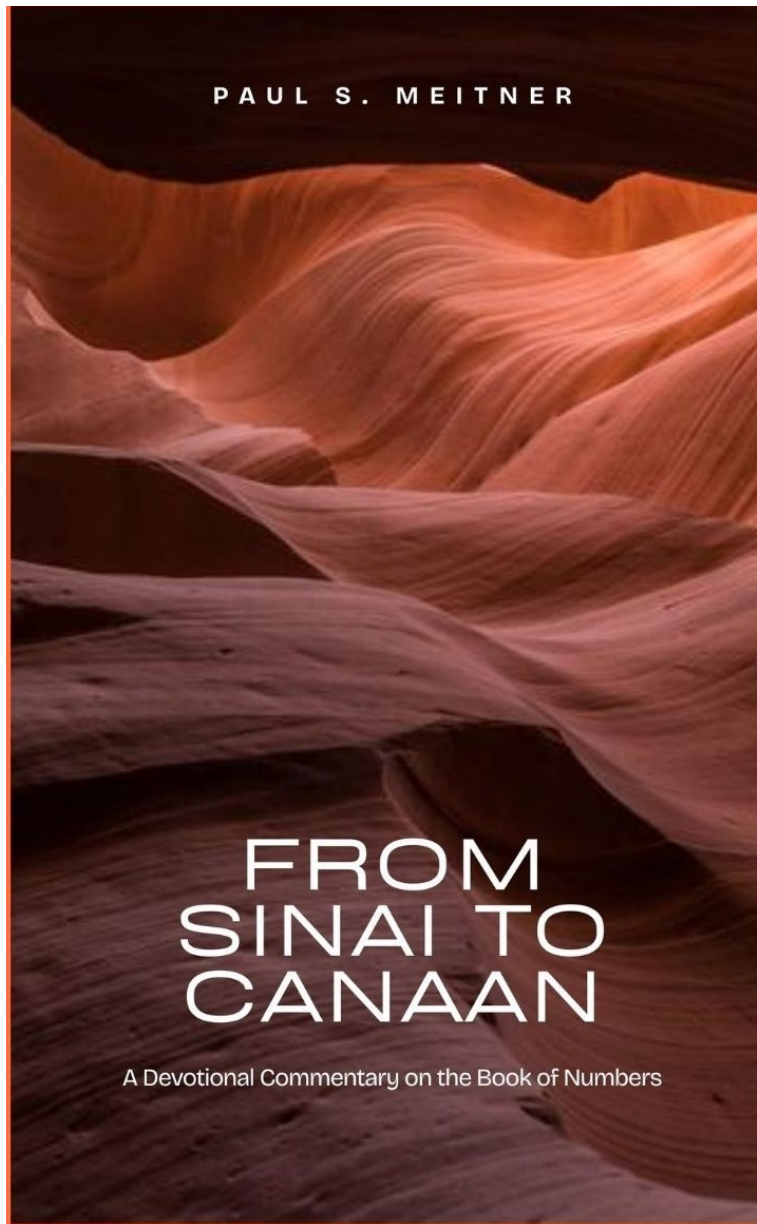
Full-time Athletic Director, Full-time Head Men's Basketball Coach & Assistant Athletic Director, Part-time Assistant Volleyball Coach. In these roles, you can help promote excellence in competition while supporting the formation of student-athletes for lives of Christian service.

Part-time Dormitory Custodians. In these roles, you will have flexible scheduling while caring for the place that our students call home during their time at MLC.

Interested individuals should apply online at mlc-wels.edu/hr/.

Pastor's new book on Numbers

If you are interested in obtaining Pastor Meitner's newest book, *From Sinai to Canaan, A devotional Commentary on the Book of Numbers*, Pastor has a sign-up sheet on the credenza in the Narthex (next to the table where church announcements, sign-ups and monthly calendars are available). You can purchase a book for \$12.00.



Prairie Lutheran School Help Wanted

PRESCHOOL & KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM ASSISTANT

The Preschool and Kindergarten Classroom Assistant will assist and support the lead teacher in creating a Christ-centered safe, and nurturing environment for young children. Under the direction of the lead teacher, responsibilities include assisting with managing daily classroom operations, assisting with lesson plans, supervising children, managing classroom cleaning, assisting with personal care (feeding/toileting), and maintaining cleanliness. The classroom assistant will provide positive behavioral guidance, and foster spiritual, social, and academic growth in accordance with WELS ministry standards.

Key Responsibilities and Duties:

Christ-Centered Care: Model Christian faith, values, and behavior for children.

Classroom Support: Under the direction of the Lead Teacher, will assist the Lead Teacher in preparing materials, setting up activities, and organizing the learning environment. Two classrooms will be used much of the preschool class time. 1.) Preschool Classroom and 2.) Kindergarten classroom. When the lead teacher is conducting class in one room, the Classroom Assistant will be leading the other classroom as per the lead teacher's instructions.

Student Supervision: Monitor children to ensure their safety, health, and provide supervision of children during classroom activities, mealtimes, naptime, outdoor play and restrooms.

Instructional Assistance: Under the direction of the Lead Teacher implement lesson plans, lead small group activities, and support individual learning goals. Must be able to lead a classroom independently, under the direction and with the materials provided by the lead teacher.

Behavioral Support: Provide positive behavioral guidance and nurture independence in children.

Cleaning & Maintenance: Maintain a clean, organized, and safe classroom environment.

Child Care & Hygiene: Assist with toileting, handwashing, and feeding routines.

Communication: Maintain positive, professional communication with parents, staff, and lead teacher. Ability to work in a team environment.

Required and Preferred Qualifications and Skills:

Faith: Christian Faith.

Education: High school diploma or equivalent is required; coursework in early childhood education (ECE) is preferred.

Experience: Previous experience working with young children in a licensed childcare or school setting would be helpful.

HEAD COOK

Summary: Responsible for overseeing the kitchen operations and ensures the meals served to students adhere to nutritional standards and cater to diverse dietary needs and operation meets all county, state and federal regulations.

1. Head cook plays a crucial role in developing menus that meet governmental and institutional health guidelines while appealing to tastes and preferences of students.
2. Maintains a high standard of food safety and hygiene within the kitchen environment, including proper handling and storage of ingredients, stringent preparation practices and the upkeep of cleanliness throughout the cooking and serving processes.
3. Maintains all necessary monitoring reports (ie. freezer, refrigerator, temperature readings, illness log, along

with all daily required menu and serving records. And any other required reporting as directed by the County, State for Federal Government.) Maintains all education records per County, State and Federal Government requirements.

4. The head cook evaluates and adapts recipes to meet budget constraints while maintaining high quality standards.
5. State certification, or ability to obtain state certification within the first three months of being hired.
6. Attend regular and yearly training courses required by the Minnesota Department of Education in person or online.
7. Ensure proper storage of food items: refrigerated, frozen, cans, boxes, etc. Adhere to county, state and federal regulations.
8. Capable to do moderate to heavy lifting (40lbs.-60lbs).
9. Work hours 6:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (varies based on need related to menu).
10. Will be compensated at an hourly rate of \$16.00 -\$22.00 /hr (based on experience) for 175 days, 6 hours per day.
11. Willing to follow Federal and State hot lunch guidelines.
12. Order food related to hot lunch program as needed based off of commodities, nutrition requirements, and state and federal requirements.
13. Administrator for the CLICS program (Minnesota School Nutrition Program (SNP)) Monitoring CLICS and ordering commodities as per the State of Minnesota & Federal Requirements. Gibbon Elementary Campus 1322 1st Avenue, Gibbon, MN 55334 Phone: (507)-834-6136 Fairfax Middle Campus 15 2nd Street NE / P.O. Box 130, Fairfax, MN 55332 Phone: (507)-426-7755 Prairie Lutheran Schools Website: www.prairielutheran.us Email Address: prairielutheranschool@gmail.com
14. Paid Time off as per the Employee Handbook.
15. Able to work with children and faculty, effective communication.
16. Complete book work and record keeping per the state and federal guidelines.
17. Background check required.
18. Able to operate commercial kitchen equipment and maintain cleanliness of equipment and maintained per county, state and federal guidelines.

Both the Classroom Assistant and Head Cook applicants should fill out an application that is available on the table in the Narthex, scan and email prairielutheranschool@gmail.com, mail the application to PO Box 130, Fairfax, MN 55332, or fax to 507-426-7755. Talk to Mr. Macord Johnson or any School Board Member for any questions.

Zion Ev. Lutheran Church
PO Box C
Winthrop MN 55396