

Zion Ev. Lutheran Church Prairie Whispers Newsletter

October 2026
Volume 6, Issue 10

What to do in chaos

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

In my first parish, I had a reoccurring daydream. Oh, I thought, the things I could accomplish among those hard-headed Yoopers if God would just give me the miracle-working power of Elijah or Elisha. Wouldn't it be wonderful, I thought, if I could stand in the backyard of some foundry foreman, papermill worker, or over-the road trucker and call down fire from heaven, and they would at once say, "The Lord, he is God! We will be in church on Sunday." But a closer reading of I and II Kings, as well as the ministry of our Lord, reveal that such wonderworking power is not what changes the hearts of men toward God.

If you still have any vestige of hope that some great power added to your preaching is going to be that magic silver bullet, then the third vision of Revelation, will kill it. In this vision, God almighty pours out his judgment against a world that refuses his grace in Christ Jesus. God pours out natural disasters to ruin the world. He pours out false teachers to afflict the unbelievers for their unbelief. He pours out death to such an extent that one third of the world is wiped of the face of the earth. All so that they might see their sin, sorrow over it, and repent.

And yet, after all this, the world goes the way of Pharaoh. No sooner has the judgment past that the world hardens its heart to God. John says, *"the rest of mankind did not repent of the work of their hands. They did not stop worshipping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood - idols that cannot see or hear or walk, nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts."*

In case you haven't got it yet -let me be blunt. It is laughable, to the point of insanity, to think you are going to change the world from being, the world. You are not going to stop Hollywood from being Hollywood, Wall Street from being Wall Street, Academia from being the Academia, the halls of power from being the halls of power. It is willful blindness to believe that marketing, power, or even mira-



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Evangelism Meeting

All are welcome to join a meeting on Monday, October 5 at 6 pm in the Fellowship Hall to assist in planning fall and holiday events.

Upcoming will be Mission Festival, Halloween Trunk-or-Treat, Thanksgiving, New Church Year, Advent and Christmas.

For any questions, contact Pastor Meitner.



Fall Cleanup

The annual Fall Cleanup will be Saturday, October 17, beginning at 8:30 am. All are welcome to get our church grounds ready for winter. Bring gloves and a willingness to get the job done!

After the grounds are finished, please help with fall cleanup at God's Treasures with picking up black walnuts, trimming perennials, etc. Children are most welcome. Please bring gloves, rakes, shovels and clippers.

cle working itself is going to stop communists from communism, Muslims from Islam, or the Woke from Progressive ideology, or rabid supporters of Donald Trump from supporting Donald Trump.

And, oh, lest I forget, this vision of Revelation further reveals that the more you try to preach the gospel, the more the world is going to take out its hardened impenitence upon you. The world is not some indifferent group that just needs a little push beyond from the outside to believe the gospel we are preaching. The church is as hated by the world as much as the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto were hated by the Nazis; as the Chinese in the city of Nanking were hated by the Imperial Japanese Army; as the America is hated by Al Qaeda.

So, what are we to do? Might I suggest this – take a deep breath and relax! Let go of all our anxiety over the future of our congregations and synod and schools by taking to heart these words of our text this evening: *The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ*. “Has become!” Think of what those two little words mean.

First, it means Christ has already overcome the world and its prince. Never cease to forget the importance of the confession: He descended into hell. This is not part of Christ's humiliation, but his exaltation. It is his “Vae Victus.” That cry means, “Woe to the vanquished!” It means that the world for all their impenitent vitriol is no different than Satan. A growling dog on a chain whose execution has been scheduled for Judgment day. Luther sings well of the world that threatens us, “*And do what they will -- Hate, steal, hurt, or kill -- Though all may be gone, Our victory is won; The kingdom's ours forever!*”

In this vision, there are two witnesses, who represent the eternal gospel preached by the Church, who are slain by enemies inside and outside the church. The world gloats over our seemingly dead body for three and a half days. Yes, in the time between Christ's ascension and return, we will bear the likeness of Christ – in his humiliation, suffering, and death. But we will never be conquered. The church will continue to grow and spread and gather a number without counting while the kingdoms of this world rise and fall around us.

Why? The old city of Jerusalem and the old earthly temple have been replaced by a new Jerusalem, and a temple that has a new foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus as the corner stone. And its walls are living stones, crafted and placed by Christ's own hands, one at a time, day after day, until the last stone is complete. Nothing can stop this building. Nothing can hinder this building. And, this is the best part, all the world's plans to destroy the church are about as effective as the plans of Satan to destroy Christ on Good Friday.

The world, who now sits in smug, hateful, condescension over the church, has already lost. Does this mean we do nothing? Hardly! Our confidence in Christ's rule does not breed on the one hand, complacent apathy that

turns the church into a museum or bunker. Nor, on the other hand, does it result in reckless iconoclasm that chucks everything overboard, like some desperate sailor who is trying to save a sinking ship. Nor is it feckless cowardice, sucking up to the world that persecutes us so that we can avoid both cross and confession.

Our Lutheran missiology and pastoral practice are rooted in the confidence best expressed by Martin Franzmann in his great mission hymn, *Preach You the Word*. *"Though some be snatched and some be scorched, and some be choked and matted flat, the Sower sows, his heart cries out, 'Oh what of that, oh what of that!'"* Oh, *what of that* is not cry of helpless desperation. Nor it is the yawn of languid laziness. It rather is the absolute confidence that Christ will accomplish through us exactly what he wants his Word and Sacraments to accomplish! So let us be faithful in doing the one thing he has asked us to do – go into all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey EVERYTHING that he has commanded. And let us never stop doing it to our fullness until this day of grace ends and Christ returns in glory, when we shall cast all our crowns to his feet and lay all the treasures his Word has gathered before him.

The culture of our church is to be this: to keep one eye on the cross, one eye on the skies as we proclaim the wonders of God to call those out of darkness and into his wonderful light. The Culture of the Christian Church is one that does run hither and yon, back and forth, in terror at every new challenge, but views the day *sub specie aeternitas*; that is from the point of view of God in eternity. That is what John is showing us here. We are the victors. The battle is hard, but the outcome, is never in doubt. Christ wins. And we will in him. Each generation will face its unique challenges. But rooted in the word, surrounded by the great cloud of witnesses who has come before us, and looking ahead confident to judgment day, we labor, we call out, we reach out. The results, those are in God's hands, who will work where and when it pleases him. Ours is to be faithful servants, waiting on his majesty, and doing the work that is placed before us. This is the culture of the church, and may, God-willing, it never change.

Amen.

PLS Fall Activities reign

"I am the vine; you are the branches; if you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." – John 15:5

Happy October from Prairie Lutheran School. We have completed a month of the new school year and everyone



Practices for choir, handbells to begin

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord!

Adult Choir practice will begin on Wednesday, September 30 at 7 pm and every Wednesday thereafter.

Handbell practice will begin October 4, following the church services.

Mark Jaeger is the director for both choirs. All are welcome to join either or both choirs.



Trunk or Treat

The annual Trunk or Treat will be held in the Zion parking lot on Saturday, October 31 from 5:30 pm to 7 pm.

Plans are being made, so say tune for more information in the bulletins and on Facebook.

eGiving

Your offering is there, even if you aren't! For this freedom, 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.



Mission Fest on Oct. 25

Zion Mission Festival will be held the last Sunday in October, which is Oct. 25.

Our speaker will be Pastor Craig Wilke, from Sure Foundation Church in Brandon, SD.

Pastor Wilke was assigned to the area from the seminary and is the founding minister of Sure Foundation.

We will also be treated by the Prairie Lutheran School Children singing that day.

Following the service will be a potluck dinner.

Watch for more details in the bulletin and on Facebook as they become available.

is settling into the routine. With God leading us, we will continue to thrive during this school year.

The construction project at the Upper Site is mostly completed. The new front doors are installed, the locks are set, the sewer line is in, the floor looks great and the new lockers are attached to the walls and working wonderfully. We are so blessed to have had help with the labor and the cost. God is good!

Our fall activities at the Upper Site are underway. The soccer team now calls the yard of Emanuel - Wellington home for practices and games. The coed team is made up of 4th - 8th grade students. Thank you to the leadership at Emanuel for welcoming our students. Our volleyball team this year is B team only since our 7th and 8th grade enrollment numbers are down. The team consists of 4th - 6th grade girls.

The Lower Site welcomes Mrs. Kaitlyn Becker as a teacher's aid. She brings experience in education to the position and has adjusted to the job with flying colors. The students at the Lower Site battled the heat one day and walked to the sunflower field on the south side of Gibbon for a mini field trip. This is an annual excursion that the students really look forward to doing.

Both sites combined for a POD Day at the Gibbon City Park on a Friday afternoon. The students were split into pods and got to know each other through activities and games. This is a great fellowship opportunity for our students and everyone had a great time.

Prairie Lutheran Schools also welcomes Wanda Opitz as our new cook. She has worked hard learning all the student and staff names. She brings many years of food service experience from several different settings. Welcome Wanda!

God's Blessings on everyone as we move forward in our school year. If you have an opportunity to watch a game, visit a school, or attend a mission devotion service we would love to see you.

In His name,
Jeff Seehafer
Upper Site teacher/AD

God's Treasures Report

Director's Report - September 10, 2026

We officially kicked off our new school year the week of September 7. This summer we purchased Christ Light curriculum for three-year-olds for our Bible lessons. The plan is to have all classrooms teach the same lesson throughout the school year and send the student guides home for families to read.

Lead Teachers at the start of the school year:

Infant- Jessica Schmidt

Toddler- Adam Schmidt

Preschool Transition- Paige Mathiowetz

Preschool 4- Naomi Johnson

We have been experiencing ongoing plumbing issues in our preschool transition room. Attempts to reopen the two sink drains have not been successful. The next option will require cutting the concrete floor to access the occluded drain lines. The goal will be to minimize any disruption to the classroom, which currently has 11 students.

September tends to be a busy month for grants, and that has certainly held true this year. We are following seven grants and are preparing to apply for all of them before the application windows close. The grants can be used to fund a variety of needs such as capital projects, technology upgrades, shade structures, outdoor learning experiences, and purchasing Minnesota grown food for our food program.

Enrollment:

44 total enrolled (includes drop-ins)

35 PT/FT/B&A care enrolled

12 prospects

Looking ahead:

Focus on grant applications over the next 1-2 months.

Blessings in Christ,

Adam Schmidt

God's Treasures Director

September Council Meeting

Zion Lutheran Church Council Meeting September 17, 2026

Meeting called to order by Ken Opitz

Secretary's Minutes

- o August minutes approved as written

Pastor's Report

- o Pastor has had some good conversations with members that have not attended in awhile
- o Kathleen O'Neil requested to be reinstated as a member
- o Pastor is planning to start a new weekly bible study Thursdays at 10:30 am
- o PLS golf outing was a success

Treasurer's Report

- o MVL, CMO, and PLS are all paid to date

Elder's Report

- o Membership Transfers:
 - Motion to transfer Jeff and Connie Majeski to St John's New Ulm. Mo-

OWLS Convention

The local Minnesota Valley Chapter 13 of the Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors (OWLS) will not be holding a regular meeting in October.

Instead the OWLS National Convention is being held in Brookfield, WI from October 13-15.

Watch the upcoming bulletins, calendars and newsletters for updates on meetings.

Greeting Cards

Zion Ladies Guild offers boxes and individual greeting cards for your needs.

Boxes are marked with the prices, while the individual cards are \$1 each.

Money is to be placed in the wooden box mounted on the wall. Checks can be made out to Zion Ladies Guild.

Along with free postcards, a selection of free-will offering DVDs, there are birthday, sympathy, thank you, anniversary, wedding, new arrivals, baptism, all occasion and get well cards.

Sermon Copies

A complimentary copy of the Sunday sermon can be found on the Ushers Table on Sunday mornings when Pastor Meitner is preaching.

He does not promise to follow it word by word, but the general meaning that he preaches can be found in the copy.

Offering Counters Needed

Counting the weekly offering is a very needed volunteer project. Two people are needed each week (on your schedule) to prepare the deposit and record the offering. Training is available.

The job has also been simplified as there are no longer special envelopes.



tion carried.

Releases:

Motion to release Shari Robinson, Kaitlyn Kannegiesser, and Rodney Cruz. Motion carried.

☐ Reinstatements:

Motion to reinstate Kathleen O'Neill. Motion carried.

Board of Education

o No members present.

o GT: Low staffing currently

☐ Kids going back to school, less kids, one less classroom

☐ Working on kitchen lease clarifications

☐ Adam Schmidt is getting a little more office time

Board of Trustees

o Lawnmowing is getting covered

o AC units- fans should be balanced

o Trash dumpster screening. Think about location, it sometimes rolls in high wind when it is empty

o Ed Woller donated \$5000 for capital improvements

☐ Refinish 18 windows on North side of church Glaser bid \$2500.

☐ Letters for sign 47 pcs \$298

☐ Louise laptop is failing, Scot Trebelhorn bid \$700 for a new one

☐ Battery powered grass trimmer Stihl FS 860 \$250

☐ Dishwasher for parsonage \$750 (Ken will install to save money)

☐ Approximately \$500 left from donation

o Snowplowing. Tyler Weber said he would do snowplowing again this winter.

o Fall Cleanup Day: October 17, 8:30 am

Old Business

o GT committee will meet before GT Oct meeting to talk about scholarship

New Business

o Pastor family medical insurance

☐ 20% increase in health insurance rates WELS VEBA

☐ Removing only Michelle from Zion's health insurance and then adding Pastor and daughters dental coverage will save Zion congregation \$14,000

☐ Motion to remove Michelle from church health insurance and add dental insurance for pastor and daughters. Motion carried.

o Next Council Meeting Thursday October 15, 2026

Lindsey Johnson, Council Secretary

August Profit and Loss

Revenue

General Fund Income **\$25,408.60**

Expenditures

Building Upkeep:

Electricity 545.48

Heat 80.96

Insurance 1,518.80

Church Maint. & Repairs 407.55

Umbrella Insurance 50.00

Total Building Upkeep **\$2,602.79**

Christian Education:

MVLHS 1,275.00

Prairie Lutheran School 8,000.00

Sunday School 305.82

Total Christian Education **\$9,580.82**

Facilities Expenses:

Copier, Cmptr purch/Maint (2 mo.) 690.87

Office Supplies 197.03

Postage & Fees 82.00

Telephone, Internet 85.09

Waste Disposal 65.20

Website 25.00

Total Facilities Expense **\$1,145.19**

For Our Worship:

Bulletins (member donation) -590.94

Offering Envelopes & Fees 34.20

Total For Our Worship **-\$556.74**

Missions

CMO **\$1,667.00**

Those Who Serve Us:

Janitorial fees 87.50

Organist fees 255.00

Secretary's wage 772.13

Conference Fees 250.00

Housing 1,153.84

Pastor Housing Equity 90.30

Pastor Health Insurance 3,094.00

Pastor Mileage 470.57

Pastor Salary with SECA Reim. 3,332.58

Payroll Expenses 60.06

Soc Sec./Medi Match Tax Expense 62.59

Workman's Comp. **\$122.79**

Total Those Who Serve Us **\$9,751.34**

Total General Expenses: \$24,190.40

Net Operating Revenue \$1,218.20

October Events

Oct. 1- 8:20 am Pastor at PLS with Grades 5-6 Catechism

Oct. 2- 8:20 am Pastor at PLS with Grades 5-8 Hymnology

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 rates.

Patriot Pages

Patriot Pages, the weekly information sheets that share what is going on at Prairie Lutheran Schools, is again available on Sundays on the Information Table in the Narthex.

Several copies are available, so feel free to pick one up and take it home to see what is new, and what is being planned.

These will be available weekly through May, 2027.

Meditations

The Daily Devotional, *Meditations*, that is dated August 30 to November 28, 2026 will be available on the Ushers Table in the Narthex. Both regular and large-print versions are available.

We learned that the books are around \$4.75 for the regular version and \$5.75 for the Large Print. If you would consider helping defray the cost, a \$5 bill in the offering plate would be appreciated.

Groaner Corner

I'm replacing my light on my ceiling today. I'll probably screw it up.

If you are driving in Louisiana, the swamps go right bayou.

The man who fell into an upholstery machine is fully recovered.

If ignorance is bliss, there should be more happy people.

- Oct. 3 – LWMS Fall Conference at Jordan
- Oct. 4– 11:15 am Handbell Choir Practice
- Oct. 5 – 6 pm Evangelism Meeting – all are welcome to plan upcoming events.
- Oct. 6– 8:20 am Pastor at PLS with Grades 5-6 Catechism.
10:30 am GT Chapel
- Oct. 7– 6-7 pm Public School (PS) Catechism.
6:30 pm Adult Choir Practice begins
- Oct. 8 – 8:20 am Pastor at PLS with Grades 5-6 Catechism
5:30 pm GT Scholarship Meeting
6:30 pm GT Board Meeting
- Oct. 9 – 8:20 am Pastor at PLS with Grades 5-8 Hymnology
- Oct. 10– 10 am Bayside Manor, Gaylord
- Oct. 11– 11:15 am Handbell Choir Practice
- Oct. 13– 8:20 am Pastor at PLS with Grades 5-6 Catechism
10:30 am GT Chapel
- Oct. 14– 6-7 pm PS Catechism
6:30 pm Adult Choir Practice
- Oct. 17– 8:20 am Pastor at PLS with Grades 5-6 Catechism
6 pm Elders Meeting
7 pm Council Meeting
- Oct. 16– 8:20 am Pastor at PLS with Grades 5-8 Hymnology
- Oct. 17 – 8:30 am Fall Grounds Cleanup, followed by GT Cleanup
- Oct. 18– 11:15 am Handbell Choir Practice
- Oct. 20– 8:20 am Pastor at PLS with Grades 5-6 Catechism
10:30 am GT Chapel
- Oct. 21– 10:30 am The Lodge service with Communion
6-7 pm PS Catechism
6:30 pm Adult Choir Practice
- Oct. 22– 8:20 am Pastor at PLS Catechism
Noon Deadline for November Calendar and Newsletter
- Oct. 23– 8:20 am Pastor at PLS with Grades 5-8 Hymnology
- Oct. 25– 10 am Mission Festival with Communion, PLS singing, Potluck to follow service
- Oct. 27– 8:20 am Pastor at PLS with Grades 5-6 Catechism
10:30 am GT Chapel
- Oct. 28– Treasure Haus Day in New Ulm -help needed
6-7 pm PS Catechism
6:30 pm Adult Choir Practice
- Oct. 29– 8:20 am Pastor at PLS with Grades 5-6 Catechism
- Oct. 30– 8:20 am Pastor at PLS with Grades 5-8 Hymnology
- Oct. 31– 5:30-7 pm Trunk-or-Treat at Zion parking lot

Santa's Helpers of Sibley County

Please look for jars and boxes at business for donations to the Santa's Helpers of Sibley County. This non-profit 501(c)3 organization is be-

ginning it's 13th year to help provide struggling families and veterans of Sibley County a more joyful holiday season. Your help is needed to make the program successful.

The drive for new and unwrapped toys will be December 8 from 8:30 am–6 pm and December 9 from 8:30 am–4 pm at American Lutheran Church in Gaylord.

Needed items thus far are Babies, 1-3 Boys and Girls, 4-7 Boys and Girls, 8-16 Boys and Girls, puzzles/games, stuffed animals, mittens, gloves, hats, wrapping paper, gift bags, scotch tape, care packages for veterans (word search books, puff corn, body wash, etc.) If you have questions, please email santashelpersibleycounty@gmail.com or call 507-299-0073.

Jars and Boxes in Winthrop are at Perennial and MidCountry Banks, City of Winthrop, Farmers Coop, Winthrop Market. Jars are also located at Tanker Bay, Bengston Family Dental, Ginny's, Gunner's Corner Pizza, BP Gas Station.

Help is also needed to make this program successful. Volunteers help purchase gifts, assist parents in picking out gifts, wrapping gifts, etc. If you are able to assist at the workshop on the Drive Days, go online to <https://signup.com/go/wZwYBaj>. It is also on the organizations' Facebook page. Monetary donations can be mailed to SCSH, PO Box 276, Henderson, MN 56044.

YouTube – by the August numbers

Zion YouTube Channel (as of September 25, 2026) has 157 subscribers. One new subscriber was gained in the month of August.

The most watched video in August was the August 2, 2026 worship service. Totally for the month, 3,208 minutes were watched of all the worship services broadcast. This was from 358 total views, which was 46% higher than the July 2026 viewing. The 53.5 hours watched was 26% higher than it was in July of this year. Zion also experienced five new uploads.

We encourage all members to come to Zion to attend the services, but if you aren't feeling well, or out-of-town, please feel free to view our services on YouTube.

Moving? College Student? In the Military?

We at Zion are trying to keep an up-to-date accounting of our member's addresses, phone numbers and emails. This includes all our college students (possible treats may be on their way...), young members out on their own, and military addresses.



If you have moved, gotten a new phone number or a new email address you wish to share, we would appreciate knowing about it. Feel free to email zion-winthrop@gmail.com with the updated information, call the office at 507-647-5582 (leave a message if there is no answer), text Louise (Zion Administrative Assistant) at 507-828-2756, or leave a note with Pastor.

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