

The Zion Bell

Dec. 2009—Jan. 2010

Come, Gain a View for Eternity
from Zion's Holy Hill

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Home for the Holidays

Where will you be celebrating Christmas this year? Sadly, for an increasing number of Christians, Christmas Eve/Christmas Day service attendance is becoming an inconvenient option rather than that around which the holidays revolve.

In our situation in life these days at Zion, we recognize that our many young families go away to parents, grandparents, and other family for the holidays, moving our Children's Christmas Program to one of the weeks before Christmas.

This is the flip side to one of the parishes in my circuit in North Dakota, who had so many grandchildren coming for Christmas that they distributed parts to the incoming children, rehearsed the day before, and had a children's service Christmas Eve with all the "imports!"

My prayer for us all is that even if we're away from our church home of Zion, we'll find our home in another congregation to celebrate Christmas.

Why? The Lord tells us that one day is as good as another! Why elevate one day above the rest? Why? For one thing, you need to be in church for Christmas for the WITNESS you give to the unbelievers around us. Ephesians 5:15-20 says, *Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ... Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

We as Christians need to make the good witness of stopping whatever we're doing, going to whatever church is near, and celebrating the incarnation of the Lord of all humankind.

It's simply pathetic to see some department

stores open, their lots full of cars, people, and children on Christmas morning—many professed Christians— **while churches' parking lots are empty and their doors remain closed** for the holiday! What kind of witness does that give to the unbelievers?

It tells them that there really isn't all that much to that "going to church" stuff. It tells them they are no different than Christians. It tells them they have no need to seek anything more in life than name-brand clothes, the latest toys, the best entertainment systems, and deep discounts on them all.

You need to be in church for Christmas to BE FED as well. Hebrews 10:23-25 says, *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

Did you happen to catch that part about "encouraging one another?" Do we ever stop to think that, as members of a congregation, our ABSENCE from church would DISCOURAGE others in their walk of faith? May it not be so! Especially in this day and age where the church and its worship are under so much attack.

Parents, see to it that your children know that there's more to the celebration of Christmas than the traditions in the home. Wherever you go, worship with your family in their church, or find a church yourself and invite them to come along. Take a stand. Live your faith. Make a witness. Feed your soul. Nearly everyone wants to be "Home for the Holidays." Your home is with Jesus and His church. Make it a point to be "Home for the Holidays" in the one home that really, truly matters. Come, celebrate with joy, purpose and great love the coming of the Lord of all into our flesh to be our Savior!

PASTOR SCHMITT'S Top Ten List

It's time to send out those Christmas Cards again. For Mary and me, it will mean a 2-for-1 deal; we never did get around to sending out cards last year. Trouble is, you see, when I was in the Seminary, there was a guy who did his Christmas letter up like the Concordia Self-Study Bible. He wrote the "text" part and his girlfriend wrote the "commentary" part. That letter was a classic. Hilarious, poignant, creative, timely. I, of course, couldn't let that go, and for the next 15 or so years, kept trying to outdo the last year's letter. Finally, the well ran dry. I had run out of clever ideas. So this year, it's back to the basic Christmas letter for Mary and me. If only the card companies would come out with just the right cards for anyone's year, I wouldn't have to think so much about mine. Here's the top ten card messages I'd like to see:

10. *Spent the month fighting the flu, Now I've got to write to you. Merry Christmas.*
9. *Just got done reading last years cards again. Your kids are better than mine. You win. Happy New Year.*
8. *Merry Christmas to my friends of all faiths. I mean no insult by the phrase. I recognize the sincerity of your faith. Just let me be sincere in mine, too, and let me wish you the joy I've found in my Lord.*
7. *Kids fine. Dogs healthy. Still working. You?*
6. *Didn't feel like going through the hassle of cards this year. Visit my site at www.whocaresalready.com if you want to see what I've been up to.*
5. *Merry Christmas from now on! If I don't want to wish you a merry Christmas at some point in the future, I'll send another card telling you so.*
4. *I spent hours on this, so the least you could do is put down the ipod to read through the enclosed letter.*
3. *Christmas used to be a happy time:
Shepherds on the hills, baby in the manger.
These days it's a crime:
Paying all the bills, cards just getting stranger.*
2. *If I don't see this card on display when I come this Christmas, I'm taking your present back!*
1. *Christ Jesus came to save sinners, of whom I am the worst. Rather than prattle on about me, let me tell you what Jesus has done for you....*

Home for the Holidays

Advent/Christmas Midweek Series

Advent is a time of preparation. It's not Christmas come early. It's a time to look at ourselves closely and see our need for a Savior. Our midweek services are given to feed you with the Gospel of the Lord, to provide you a time to step back from the hassles of the world, to encourage you with the fellowship of the saints, and to prepare aright your heart to celebrate with joy the feast of the Nativity.

This year our services will center around the theme, **"Home for the Holidays."** We'll use the titles of some familiar TV shows for the three weeks:
(Services at 4:30 and 7:00 PM)

Dec. 2: This Old House
Nearly every house these guys find has foundation troubles. How are our foundations doing?

Dec. 9: Home Improvement
Always looking for "More Power!" Tim the Tool Man found trouble. What power should we seek?

Dec. 16: Extreme Makeover:
Home Edition
Ty Pennington doesn't mess around with old houses, he destroys and rebuilds. Christ did the same with His New Testament and New Kingdom!

**Then, on Christmas Eve, we'll put a new spin on the song,
"I'll be Home for Christmas"**
Jesus made His home among us
so that our home with Him is made certain.

Student Ministry

PROGRESSIVE DINNER & CAROLING

SUNDAY, DEC 13, 5-8 PM

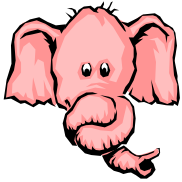
All youth (6-12 grade) are invited to an evening of singing and food. Please sign up in the high school youth room by noon.



WHITE ELEPHANT PARTY

Sun, Dec 20, 6:30-8 PM

All high school youth are invited to join us for a white elephant Christmas party. Please bring a wrapped white elephant gift (cheap new or used) and a snack to share.



SKIING @ CRESCENT

SAT, JAN 23, 9 AM - 4 PM ISH

All 6th - 12th grade youth (and friends) are invited to a day of skiing. The cost is \$30 for skiing and a little more for snowboarding. The cost includes lunch. Parents and other adults are also invited to attend. If younger siblings wish to attend they must be at least 9 years old and with a parent.



Please bring snow gear (gloves, hat, socks, coat, snow pants, etc...) and extra \$ for additional food.

To go you must sign up in the high school room, pay \$30, and turn in the permission sheet (found in the high school room) by Sunday, Jan 17.

CHILDREN TO SING AT 10:30 AM

WORSHIP SERVICE

JANUARY 24

HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP SCHEDULE

Nov 29		No Youth Group
Dec 6	6:30-8 PM	Normal Night
Dec 13	5-8:30 PM	Christmas Caroling
Dec 20	6:30-8 PM	White Elephant Party
Dec 27 & Jan 3		No Youth Group
Jan 10 & 17	6:30-8 PM	Normal Night
Jan 23		Skiing
Jan 24		No Youth Group
Jan 31	6:30-8 PM	Normal Night

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Join Zion's children on Saturday, December 19 @ 6 PM as they lead us in worship with, "Messengers for the Messiah".

All children are invited to participate. There is a sign up sheet found in the narthex. Rehearsals are Sat, Dec 5 from 10:30-11:30 AM and Sat, Dec 12 from 1-2 PM. Songs will also be practiced during the Sunday School opening @ 9:15.



MIDWEEK

Midweek will resume on Wednesday, January 6 @ 5:30 PM. Midweek is for all children PK4 - 5th grade.

At midweek the children rotate between snacks, games, and crafts while learning Bible stories. Haven't come yet? Start in January!

CONFIRMATION

Classes will resume on Wednesday, January 6 @ 5:30 PM with "The Reformation", "Apostle's Creed - 3rd Article & Office of Keys", "Communion", and "Guy Talk".

SAVE THE DATE!

Zion's Annual Valentine Dinner will be Sunday evening, February 14th.



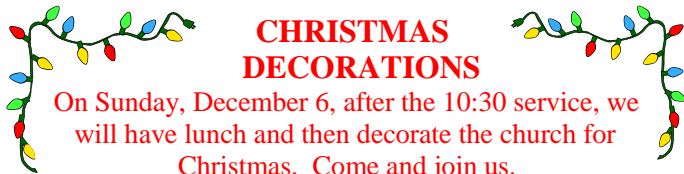
CARD TABLES NEEDED—February 14th

The Youth will need to borrow folding card tables for the Valentine Dinner. Those willing to let them borrow them for the day should drop them off by Sunday, February 14th by 11:30 AM.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec 5	10:30-11:30 AM	Children's Christmas Rehearsal
Dec 12	1-2 PM	Children's Christmas Rehearsal
Dec 13	5-8 PM	Christmas Caroling
Dec 19		Children's Christmas Service
Dec 20	6:30-8 PM	White Elephant Party
Jan 23		Skiing @ Mt Crescent
Jan 24		Children Sing
Feb 14		Valentine Dinner
March 12-13		Extreme Lock-In
April 4		Easter Egg Hunt
May 16		Rite of Confirmation
June 6-10		Vacation Bible School
July 17-21		National High School Youth Gathering



CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

On Sunday, December 6, after the 10:30 service, we will have lunch and then decorate the church for Christmas. Come and join us.

~ Board of Fellowship ~

CONCORDIA ACADEMY OPEN HOUSE
Tuesday, December 1
6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Learn more about how a Christ-centered education can make a difference in the life of your child. At the Concordia Academy Open House, you will have the opportunity to tour the school as well as talk with teachers and parents of current students. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. For more information call, email or visit our website.

Concordia Academy
Kindergarten—6th grades
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Lower level of the Westside Community Center
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CHRIST IS BORN! COME AND SEE!

“Christmas at Concordia” featuring the music of the Bands, Choirs and String Ensemble from Concordia Jr/Sr High School will be presented on Friday, December 18 at 7 p.m. in the Concordia Gym (156th & Fort St.). There is no admission charge—a free-will offering will be taken. Refreshments will be served during the intermission.

A Concordia Christmas

On behalf of the Concordia University, Nebraska family, I invite you to join us for our annual **Christmas at Concordia** celebration December 5 and 6. Christmas at Concordia is a musical celebration featuring concert performances and devotional presentations by student musicians and faculty from the university department of music. **Christmas at Concordia** events include several opportunities for you to celebrate our Savior’s birth, God’s ultimate gift of love and peace, during this Christmas season:

Concerts are scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 5 at 3 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 6 at 3 and 7 p.m. at St. John Lutheran Church, 919 N. Columbia Ave. in Seward. Admission is free, but tickets are required.

Holiday buffet dinners accompany the concerts and are scheduled for Saturday, 4:30-6 p.m. and Sunday, 4:30-6:30, in the Janzow Campus Center. Tickets are required for the buffet dinners.

The 15th Annual Scholarship Parade of Homes tour of five Seward homes decked out in Christmas cheer is scheduled for Sunday, 12:30-4:30 p.m. Tickets are required.

All reservations and tickets may be obtained by calling 800-535-5494, ext. 7408, by email to alumni@cune.edu or on-line registration at www.cune.edu/Christmas.

JANUARY VOTERS’ MEETING

Plan to attend the next quarterly Voters’ Assembly in January immediately following the late worship service (date to be determined). You will have an opportunity to share your views on the proposed budget for the new year.

PROGRESSIVE DINNER & CAROLING SUNDAY, DEC 13, 5-8 PM

Zion’s Youth invite you to an evening of food and song. We will be caroling at local nursing & retirement homes as well as to some of Zion’s shut-ins.

To help us plan for food, please sign up on the bulletin board in the narthex.

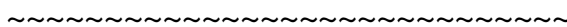
No musical talent needed!



CONCORDIA FAMILIES AND FRIENDS

How would you all like to help Concordia Jr/Sr High win \$100,000 from US Cellular? All you have to do is: 1). Stop into a US Cellular store and, 2). Pick up a voting form, then go online and vote. There is no purchase necessary just a little time. Here is the link to vote: http://www.uscc.com/uscellular/SilverStream/Pages/x_page.html?p=callingallcommunities.

Please help us try and win this prize.



Calling All Communities

Vote for your school and help it be one of ten to win \$100,000.

We believe educating our kids has never been more of a priority. That’s why we’re out to support the cause by giving schools money to use toward what they feel is important.

1). From November 13, 2009, through January 15, 2010, visit any **U.S. Cellular® store** to get a code to use online to vote for your

school. There is no purchase necessary to vote.

2). Go on line and vote for your school http://www.uscc.com/uscellular/SilverStream/Pages/x_page.html?p=callingallcommunities.

Here is the link for the Omaha area US Cellular stores.

http://www.uscellular.com/uscellular/SilverStream/Pages/x_page.html?p=storeFinder

The 10 schools with the most votes will receive \$100,000 to use however they choose.

Whether the school is big, small, public, private, a primary, middle or high school, they’re all eligible to be a Calling All Communities champion.

JOINT MEETING OF THE REBEKAH AND LYDIA CIRCLES

September 19th was the date of the annual joint meeting of the Rebekah and Lydia Circles. Pastor opened with a prayer and then we enjoyed a delicious salad luncheon. There were fifteen members, three guests and Pastor present.

Wilma Knapp, sister to Joan Graham, was our speaker. She had been to Indonesia on a mission trip in January. They helped and visited the schools trying to teach them some English and hopefully tell them about Jesus by showing them love and caring. They had to be very careful what they said because of the Muslim faith. Wilma showed slides along with her talk and we really enjoyed hearing what they did and what she told us about the country.

Judy Treadway conducted the joint meeting. Oct. 4th was our LWML Sunday and Circle members were greeters and did the readings in the church services. We also served coffee cakes between the services and had a display to inform members what the LWML is all about.

The Fall Zone Rally on Oct. 11th, held at Trinity Murdock, was attended by several of our ladies.

We adjourned the joint meeting with the Lord's Prayer and then went to our separate groups and had our own meetings.

Aleta Neuhaus, Secretary

Lydia Circle News

Lydia Circle's Oct. 29th meeting was opened with a poem about Martin Luther. Seven members and Pastor were present. "Ask the Pastor" was our program and there were questions and discussion on angels.

Elaine Raabe gave a report on the Fall Rally held at Trinity Murdock on Oct. 11th. Plans were made for things to be done for the Festival of Trees on Nov. 20th & 21st at St Johns, Bennington. The theme for our Circles' tree is "Sheep". The sheep were donated by Marilyn Walz.

There was discussion on the plans for our "Baking Event" coming up on Nov. 21st & 22nd. Posters will be put up and ladies offered the times they could be there to help. This event is in place of the Bazaar which we used to have.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to welcome Elaine Raabe as our new President and Shirley Lang as Vice President for the next two years. A BIG THANKYOU goes to our past President, Eunice Neuhaus and Vice President, Marybeth Cohrs for their many years of holding those offices.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer and the table prayer. Connie Hagen served refreshments. Shirley Lang will be our hostess in Nov. We love to have visitors, come anytime. The meeting dates and time are always in the bulletin.
Aleta Neuhaus, Secretary

Rebekah Circle News

On October 27, 2009, 8 members of the Rebekah Circle met in the Lakeview Room. Barb Kruse and Carol Scebold volunteered to again be treasurer and secretary. Thank you! The Global Gift Bags have been delivered to Orphan Grain Train in Norfolk. Deliveries continue to Project Hope and to the Ronald McDonald House.

The joint meeting of the two Circles was held Sept. 19. For more detail, please read the joint meeting notes above.

Zion will host the Tri-Zone Spring Workshop on April 18, 2010. The Circles will provide refreshments and setup. The NE North District Convention will be held at King of Kings, June 4 & 5, 2010. Zion will provide volunteers to help with the various areas of the convention.

The Festival of Trees is Nov. 20 & 21 at St. Johns in Bennington. The Circles will provide a tree with the theme, "The Lord is My Shepherd". Discussion was held on the Bakery Event, Nov. 21 & 22, to arrange for helpers for setup, sales and cleanup.

Pastor reported on the Pastors' Convention he attended recently in North Platte. Wonderful refreshments were provided by Carole Thompson.

Carol Scebold, Secretary

PROJECT HOPE

First let me share of few words from the Director of Project Hope. She states that Project Hope could not survive without the help of others. With all the economic issues, they are now seeing more and more clients who have never had to ask for help before. Because of this, they ask for our continued support of their ministry and they pray that we think of them during this busy holiday season and on into the new year.

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, the staff of Project Hope stop at noon to thank God for their blessings and ask God that they can continue to reach out to those in need as the Lord would want. Please help them in praying for their clients and their families.

This holiday season, Project Hope will once again try to help their clients with special meals in celebration of Thanksgiving and Christmas, along with toys, new underwear, and God's Word. Their hope is everyone can sit down with family and celebrate these special holidays with a few less worries and stress.

December's featured items are coffee, tea, cocoa and stew. In January, they are soups (either canned or dried) saltine crackers, and macaroni & cheese. Even if you donate only one item, this adds up to be a help to Project Hope. Watch the sales to help with your donation!

Finally let us remember: "And if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness and your night will become like the noonday." Isaiah 58:9-11

Kathy Rummel, Coordinator

PROJECT HOPE/OPEN DOOR MISSION

As you may have noticed by now, the Project Hope/Open Door Mission tree is now up and waiting to be "decorated" with caps, mittens, gloves, and scarves for boys, girls, men and women of all ages. We don't know yet if this will be a harsh winter or not, but in the cold days ahead, these people are in need of warmth and our "decorations" can do that.

All you need to do is purchase any of the above mentioned items and put them on the tree. Deliveries will be on going through the month of February. We will make deliveries as often as necessary. Updates on the quantities being delivered will be in future bulletins.

If you have any questions, please contact Kathy Rummel.
The Rebekah and Lydia Circles

GLOBAL GIFT BAGS

Forty Global Gift Bags were delivered to the Orphan Grain Train in Norfolk, NE on Nov. 10. The Orphan Grain Train was in the process of filling a container to be shipped to Nicaragua and it was likely that our Gift Bags would be included.

Unfortunately, for several reasons, this mission project is ending Dec. 31. We want to thank all the members of Zion who helped with this mission effort, not only this year, but for the last 5 years. We not only helped orphan children but also mothers in the past years and helped to spread the message of God's love throughout the world.

We pray that we are led to another opportunity in the future to do a similar mission.
The Rebekah & Lydia Circles.

CARD COUNTER

Christmas cards and napkins are now available at the card counter in the narthex. All items are priced for your convenience. Quantities are limited, so make your selections early. Also available are various occasion cards individually or by the box. This service is provided by the Rebekah Circle.

POP CAN TABS

Another 1900 tabs were delivered to the Ronald McDonald House this past week. That means our total to date should be over 30,000. I thank those who have counted the tabs and put the total in their bags, it is a big help.

For our new members or for those that are not aware, we collect the tabs off of pop cans and donate them to the Ronald McDonald House. All you need to do is bring your tabs to the Lakeview Room and put them on the east counter by the miniature Ronald McDonald House. Our long term goal is to achieve collecting a million.

Thank you to everyone for their donations of tabs.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are 3 LWML Zones of LCMS in Omaha: West, North, South—Zion is in the West Zone which includes 8 churches: Divine Shepherd, Omaha; Good Shepherd, Gretna; Immanuel, Louisville; King of Kings, Omaha (4 societies); Lord of Life, Elkhorn; Our Redeemer, Springfield; Trinity, Murdock; Zion, Omaha (2 societies).

Omaha West LWML Zone officers are: President, Lana Erickson (King of Kings); Vice-President Mission Education, Sharon Roeber (Trinity, Murdock); Secretary, Joyce Schlosser (King of Kings); Treasurer, Lisa Stirtz (Good Shepherd); Historian, Judy Story (Trinity, Murdock); Pastoral Counselor, Rev. Brent Kuhlman (Trinity, Murdock).

The Fall Rally each year is held at a different church (alphabetical order) by the West Zone; the Tri-Zone Spring Workshop alternates the meeting place among the 3 Zones. Women in the congregation are welcome at these inspiring events!