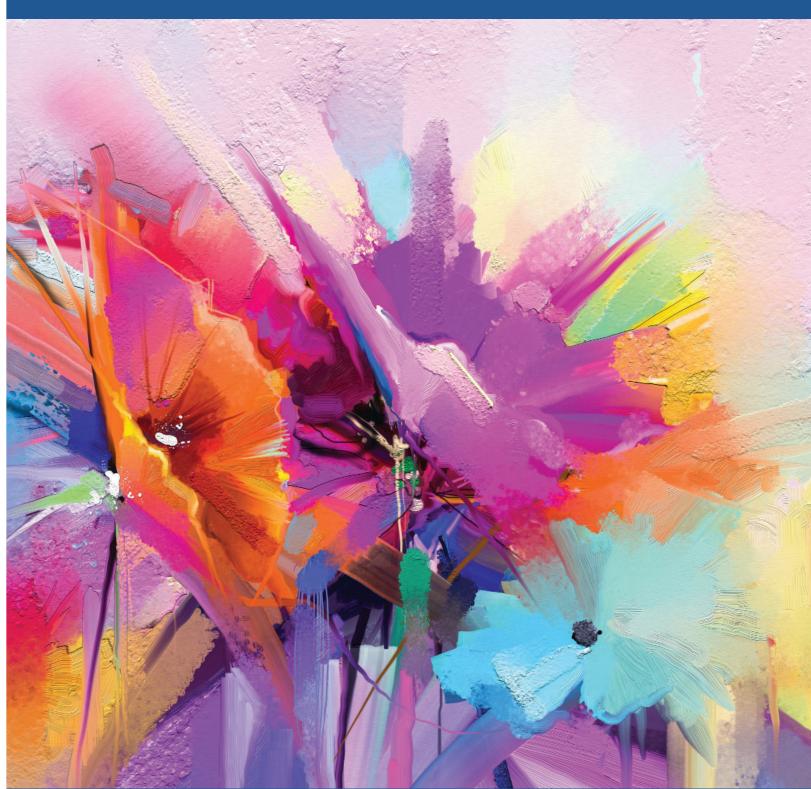
May 14, 2023 • Sixth Sunday of Easter 9:00 and 11:30am





WELCOME TO ZION

When we gather for worship, we're receptive to God's word and we rejoice in God's grace through song, prayer, and Holy Communion. The history of Christian worship is rich with rituals formed by generations. These traditions, prayers, and pastoral teachings help connect our lives with Christ. In our daily lives, we show God's love by serving our community, both locally and globally.

We are a group of believers seeking to respond to Christ's call to worship and serve, even as we wrestle with the big questions of life. We want you to know that you and your questions, faith, and doubts are welcome here!

HOW WE WORSHIP

The Holy Spirit gathers people around the means of grace: the Word of God and the Sacraments. From the table of Holy Communion where Christ comes with forgiveness, life, and salvation, God sends us out to share the good news and care for those in need. Our worship follows this pattern in four parts: Gathering, Word, Meal, and Sending. By its very nature, Lutheran worship is participatory and the service is contained within this bulletin. Worship leaders guide us through the service and our responses are printed in **bold type.**

We welcome children in our worship services! If needed, a nursery is available down the hallway past the restrooms. The restrooms contain changing tables, as needed.

Throughout the service, members of Zion's music ministry offer their talents as an offering to God. Please receive their musical gifts as a time for prayer, contemplation, or praise of God rather than a performance to be applauded, so that we may worship God throughout our time here together.

THE SEASON OF EASTER

Alleluia! He is risen! So begins the joyous Season of Easter. As we emerge from the somber time of Lent, we speak and sing our alleluias once again. Easter isn't over after just one day - for six weeks, we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus through song and stories.

What does the resurrection of Jesus mean for us? A prayer in our funeral liturgy says it well: "Make us certain that because he lives we shall live also, and that neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come, will be able to separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord..." Because Christ lives, we live also. Alleluia!

Zion Lutheran Church

9944 Leslie Road • San Antonio, Texas 78254 • 210-688-3090 • zion@zionsa.org

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, gathers us in worship.

PRELUDE Christ the Lord is Risen Today! setting by Frank Ferko

WELCOME Pastor Dan Heim

Please rise, as you are able.

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

In the name of the Father, and of the ♥ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

Water is poured into the font as the presiding minister gives thanks.

We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight. Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family. Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom. At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit. By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons, making us heirs of your promise and servants of all.

We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life, and above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ. Shower us with your Spirit, and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love.

To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Amen.



Text: John of Damascus, c. 696–c. 754; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866, alt. Music: ELLACOMBE, German melody, 18th cent.; adapt. X. L. Hartig, *Melodien zum Mainzer Gesangbuche*, 1833

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

CANTICLE OF PRAISE





PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Almighty and ever-living God, you hold together all things in heaven and on earth. In your great mercy receive the prayers of all your children, and give to all the world the Spirit of your truth and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Please be seated.

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WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.

CHILDREN'S CHAT

FIRST READING: ACTS 17:22-31

²²Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. ²³For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, ²⁵nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. ²⁶From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, ²⁷so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸For 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said,

'For we too are his offspring.'

²⁹Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. ³⁰While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

Word of God, word of life. Thanks be to God.



Text: Alexander Gondo; tr. I-to Loh, b. 1936, alt. Music: UYAIMOSE, Alexander Gondo

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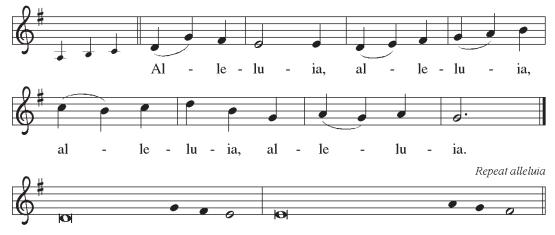
SECOND READING: 1 PETER 3:13-22

¹³Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? ¹⁴But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, ¹⁵but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; ¹⁶yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. ¹⁷For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. ¹⁸For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, ²⁰who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. ²¹And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²²who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

Word of God, word of life. Thanks be to God.

Please rise, as you are able.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



You have the words of e-ter-nal life.

GOSPEL: JOHN 14:15-21

The holy gospel according to John. Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁵"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. ¹⁷This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

¹⁸"I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. ¹⁹In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. ²⁰On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them."

The gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

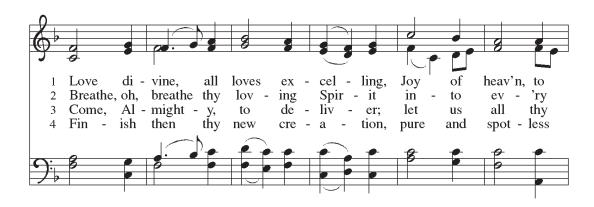
SERMON

Pastor Kathi Johnson

Please rise, as you are able.

HYMN OF THE DAY

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling





Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–1788 Music: HYFRYDOL, Rowland H. Prichard, 1811–1887

APOSTLES' CREED

Let us now confess our faith using the words of the Apostles' Creed: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic* church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

*catholic: universal

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

United in the hope and joy of the resurrection, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

Each petition ends: Hear us, O God.

Response: Your mercy is great.

Rejoicing in the victory of Christ's resurrection, we lift our prayers and praise to you, almighty and eternal God; through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.

Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

Please be seated

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please check the back pages of this bulletin for additional announcements.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus.

OFFERING

At this time, we give our offerings with thanksgiving to God. These offerings support the mission and ministry of Zion, including the care of those in need. To give online, please visit ZionSA.org. Children are invited to come forward during the music and place their offerings in the jar to the left of the Chancel area (near the Sacristy door). During the offering music, the pastor sets the table with the elements for Holy Communion. Please know that this is the Lord's table, and all are welcome to receive Communion.

OFFERING MUSIC

Children's Trio 9:00 A Hymn of Promise by Natalie Sleeth 11:30

Easter Anthem in a Celtic Style by Bradley Norris Youth Choir

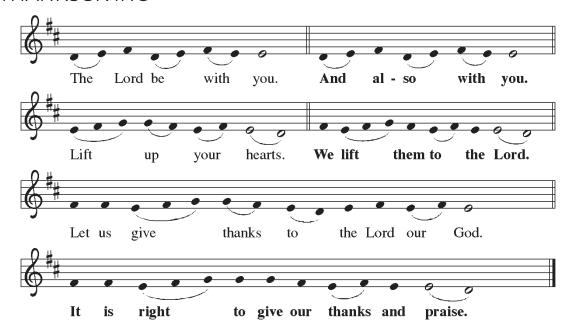
Please rise, as you are able.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. Generous God,

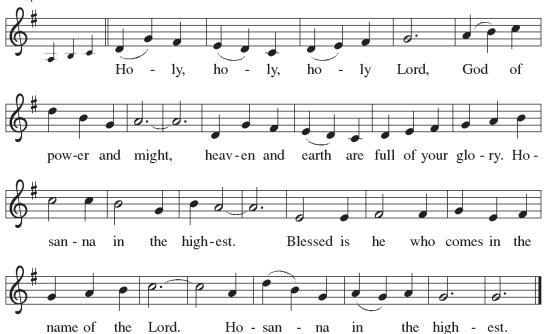
in this meal you offer your very self. We give you thanks for these gifts. In the breaking of this bread reveal to us the Risen One. In the pouring of this wine pour us out in service to the world; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING



It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, for the glorious resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ, the true Paschal Lamb who gave himself to take away our sin; who in dying has destroyed death, and in rising has brought us to eternal life. And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the resurrection, with earth and sea and all their creatures, and with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:





Holy God, mighty Lord, gracious Father: Endless is your mercy and eternal your reign. You have filled all creation with light and life; heaven and earth are full of your glory.

We praise you for the grace shown to your people in every age: the promise to Israel, the rescue from Egypt, the gift of the promised land, the words of the prophets; and, at this end of all the ages, the gift of your Son, who proclaimed the good news in word and deed and was obedient to your will, even to giving his life.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Therefore, O God, with this bread and cup we remember the life our Lord offered for us. And, believing the witness of his resurrection, we await his coming in power to share with us the great and promised feast.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Send now, we pray, \P your Holy Spirit, that we who share in Christ's body and blood may live to the praise of your glory and receive our inheritance with all your saints in light.

Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

Join our prayers with those of your servants of every time and every place, and unite them with the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest until he comes as victorious Lord of all. Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray as Jesus has taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION

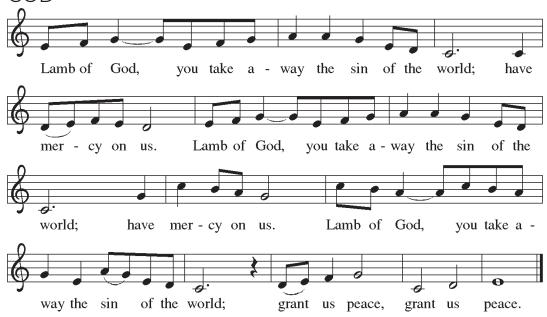
These are the gifts of God for you, the beloved people of God.

Please be seated.

COMMUNION

Jesus welcomes all to this holy meal! Children who commune should be assisted by adults who are with them. Those who do not wish to receive Holy Communion are invited to come forward to receive a blessing. If you are unable to come forward, please notify an usher and we will bring the sacrament to you. Gluten-free wafers are available; please ask the person serving bread. White grape juice is available in the center of the communion tray for any who are unable to drink wine. After taking Communion, please return to your seat for singing and prayer.

LAMB OF GOD

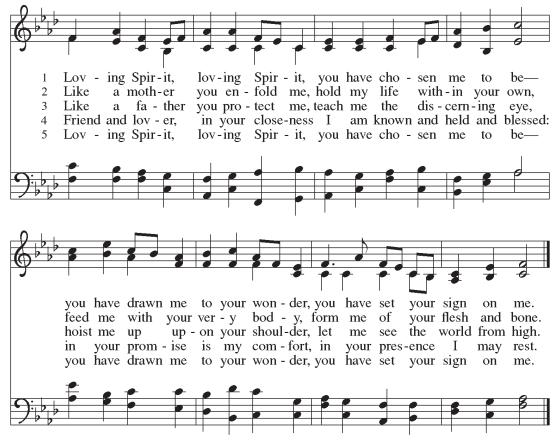


COMMUNION MUSIC

11:30

There is Room at the Table by David Lantz III

Youth Choir



Text: Shirley Erena Murray, b. 1931 Music: RESTORATION, W. Walker, Southern Harmony, 1835; arr. hymnal version

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After communion, we rise and share in blessing and prayer.

BLESSING

May the true body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you always in God's grace.

Amen.

PRAYER

Let us pray. We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life. In your mercy, strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us out in peace.

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ₱ give you peace.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN on next page

DISMISSAL

Go in peace and share the good news.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice and Sing setting by John Leavitt

AVAILABLE FOR PRAYER

Immediately following each service, Stephen Ministers are often available to pray with you at the altar rail. All prayers and conversations are confidential.



Text: John B. Geyer, b. 1932 Music: ENGELBERG, Charles V. Stanford, 1852–1924 Text © John B. Geyer.

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Scan QR code for this month's calendar

Worship Support

Altar Guild Bonnie Bahr, Betsy Howard Mona McQuien, Ruth Medbury Karen Sturdivant

Lay Readers
9:00
Mary Mora
11:30
Mike DeHart

Communion Servers
9:00
Bonnie and Brinkley Harrell
11:30
LeShea Clabough and Kevin McGee

Livestream Steve Johnson David Umlang

Sound Scott Van Doren

May Ushers
9:00
Rachel & Stuart Williams
Linda & Bruce Krueger
11:30
Pam Gammage, Caleb DeHart
Kim and Mike DeHart
Chris Berg

THIS WEEK AT ZION		
Sunday, May 14		
Pie Sale Hosted by Women of Zion	8:30	Gazebo
Worship in person	9am	Sanctuary
Faith Formation Hour	10:15	Details next page
New Member Class #2	10:15	FLC Room 101
Adult Class: Week Ahead	10:15	Fellowship Hall
Worship in person and online	11:30	Sanc & YouTube
Monday, May 15		
Game Group st/3rd	1pm	FLC 101
LMM Fellowship & Dinner Details next page	6:30	Sea Island Restaurant
Tuesday, May 16		
Exercise Group	9am	Church 2
Council Mtg	6:30	Fellowship Hall
Handbell Choir	6:30	Sanc Balcony
Warriors Anonymous	7pm	Church 2
Wednesday, May 17		
High School/Elementary Mentoring	7:15am	Nichols Elementary
Weight Watchers Mtg	9:30	Church 2
Crafty Bunch	9:30	Ed Bldg Craft Rm
Midweek Worship Services	1:00 & 6:30	Church 1/Chapel
AA - Alcoholics Anonymous	7pm	FLC 202
Al-Anon Meeting	7pm	FLC 101
Chancel Choir	7:15	Sanctuary
Thursday, May 18		
Quilting for Lutheran World Relief	9:30	Fellowship Hall
Weight Watchers Mtg	9:30	Church 2
Youth Night every other	6:30	Ministry Center
River City Ringers Concert	7pm	Sanctuary
Book Study with Pr Kathi	7pm	Zoom
Fiesta Flutes Rehearsal	7pm	Church 2
Stephen Ministry Training	7pm	FLC 101
Friday, May 19		
Camp Hope Training Lock-in		Fellowship Hall & Ministry Center
Cal	lendar co	ntinued next page

Calendar continued

Saturday, May 20

Weight Watchers Meetings	8:30 & 10:30	Church 2
Communion Class Bread Baking	9:30	Fellowship Hall
Auditions for Addams Family Show	2pm	Family Life Center

Sunday, May 21

worsnip in person	9am	Sanctuary
Faith Formation Hour	10:15	Details next page
Adult Class: Week Ahead	10:15	Fellowship Hall
New Member Class #3	10:15	FLC 101
Worship in person and online	11:30	Sanc & YouTube
Auditions for Addams Family Show	2pm	Family Life Center



Men's Fellowship

Third Monday, May 15 6:30pm

All men are invited to meet at Sea Island (11715 Bandera) for food, thoughtful study, camaraderie, and all YOUR ideas for Men's Ministry! Contact David Umlang at lmm@zionsa.org if you need more details.

Sip Wine and Mingle

Friday, May 19 at Total Wine - the Rim

Tasting begins at 5pm. Try out various wine styles to find the ones you like! Talk to a wine expert for suggestions and answers. \$20 per person, 21 and older, and space is limited. Use the QR to RSVP to Bruce Krueger, or get his contact info from the church office (210-688-3090).

This event is presented for all adults by Lutheran Men in Mission.



Sunday Faith Formation

Begins at 10:15am

Children

Preschool	MC Room 3
Kinder-4 th	MC Room 4

Youth Classes

Grade 5-7	MC Room 5
Grade 8-9	MC Room 7
Grade 10-12	MC Room 8

Adult Classes Week Ahead Bible Study

10:15 with Pastor Kathi, in the Fellowship Hall. Take a look at the lessons we have in worship each week. What's their context? How do we make sense of them as 21st century Christians?

Two Midweek Services

Wednesdays at 1pm and 6:30pm in Church 1

Simple communion worship services in Zion's historic chapel.

CONTACT



zionsa.org



zionsa



@zionsatx



zion@zionsa.org



210-688-3090



9944 Leslie Road, 78254



8:30am-5:00pm Friday close at 3:00pm

STAFF DAYS OFF

Pastor Kathi - Monday kjohnson@zionsa.org

Pastor Dan - Monday dheim@zionsa.org

Rob Mikulski - Monday rmikulski@zionsa.org

Sammy Mikulski - Monday theatre@zionsa.org

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Game Group

May 15 at 1:00pm

Come for table games and daytime fellowship for all ages. Meet in Family Life Center Room 101 on the first and third Mondays.

End-of-the-Year Youth Night May 18

Middle & High School Dinner and Fellowship 6:30-8:30 in Ministry Center

Zion's high school and middle school youth meet to enhance their impact on their community, collectively – with service projects, Bible discussion that relates to their daily lives, dinner and something else fun – to build a community on mission. Plans are to resume this activity in the fall.

Please use the QR code to RSVP so we have enough food and supplies!



Summer Theatre Camp 2023

June 5-16 for Grades K-12

Registration and audition form is available at ZionSA.org, or from the church office during business hours.



Quilting for LWR Summer Schedule

First and Third Thursdays at 9:30am

If you don't sew, consider learning some basics this summer with LWR Quilters! If you DO sew, join in to help create simple quilts for Lutheran World Relief. The durable quilts we make are sent all over the world to be used as bedding, room dividers, and shelter.

If you can't make it to the quilting meetings, quilt tops can be sewn at home at your convenience. Fabric is provided. Contact Diane Stewart through the church office.

Women of Zion

Join in activities and fellowship with other women in the congregation. Scan the QR code to get on the mailing list, or send an e-mail to WOZ@zionsa.org.

Women of Zion Events

- Mothers' Day Pie Sale TODAY, May 14. Pies are on sale in the gazebo until they run out. This popular (and delicious) event benefits Lutheran World Relief.
- Tuesday June 13, WOZ Bible Study & More. Fellowship, service projects with a Bible study on the second Tuesday at 10:00am in the Fellowship Hall. All women are invited!

Dinner Out at Surfing Crab

Thursday, June 1 at 6:30pm

Dinner Out invites all adults to meet this month at Surfing Crab Cajun Restaurant, 9837 I-10 West at Wurzbach in the Colonade. Come early for socializing; dinner seating is at 6:30.

RSVP by May 29 to Jim or Sandy Chillstrom. Call the church office if you need their contact info.

Coming in June

Habitat for Humanity Breakfast Fundraiser



Hosted by LMM on Sunday, June 4

Everyone is invited for breakfast on June 4 in the Family Life Center, 8:00-11:30am! No tickets needed - just drop in. A free-will offering basket will be at the door, along with door prizes and other goodies. A Habitat for Humanity representative will be on hand to talk with you about this organization. Please come enjoy food and fellowship for a good cause!

Zion's Habitat for Humanity goal this year is \$5,000. We are currently about \$1,300 shy of that goal. Help Zion help others achieve their goal of home ownership.

CAMP HOPE

SUMMER 2023 - TRAVELERS



June 19-23 and/or June 26-30 Check your Z-Mail or scan this QR code for details and registration form.

Students entering Kindergarten through 7th grade are eligible.



Camp Hope

May Music Events at Zion

Both these performances are in the Church 3 sanctuary.

- The River City Ringers, a five-octave handbell choir, presents: "In Honor Of" on Thursday, May 18 at 7:00
- The Fiesta Flutes
 presents their Spring Concert on
 Thursday, May 25 at 7:00



Continue to keep our Stephen Ministers and Stephen Leaders in your prayers as they reach the midpoint in the 50 hours of Stephen Minister training.

SESSION TEN – CONFIDENTIALITY

Our Stephen Ministers take an indepth look at an essential principle of quality Christian care, confidentiality. Everything a care receiver tells a Stephen Minister and even the identity of the care receiver remain strictly confidential. It is in this safe environment of trust and acceptance that God can bring hope and healing to a care receiver.

If you would like to request help from a Stephen Minister, contact LeShea Clabough by calling the Zion office, 210-688-3090

Help Fight Hunger in San Antonio!

Feed SA is a citywide movement to fight hunger alongside the San Antonio Food Bank. With your help we will provide meals for 200,000+ children who are at risk of facing hunger this summer.

Zion will collect food, diapers and pet food throughout the month of May. Bring your donations to the collection bins or barrels in the narthex and gazebo.



Recycling Aluminum Cans

Zion has a collection barrel for your empty, dry aluminum cans, without any food or beverage residue. Drop



them off into the swing-top barrel in the south (cemetery side) parking lot, next to the shed. Your deposits will benefit Zion's Youth program.

Crafty Bunch

Wednesdays at 9:30

The Crafty Bunch meets in the Education Building on the west side of Leslie Road. Enter at the double doors, behind Churches 1 and 2. The craft room is the first room on the right.

Bring your own project to work on, or check what's in the cabinets.

Your generosity empowers Lion's ministry

From Sunday morning worship to feeding families for the holidays, collecting clothing for local charity or relief supplies shipped hundreds of miles, to friendships fostered worldwide with simple hand stitches.

Because you kindly share your time, lend your skills, and support your ministry financially, Zion's impact reaches far beyond the four walls of our sanctuary. On behalf of everyone we're able to help, thank you for your contribution.

For more ways to support Zion's mission, scan this OR code.



MAY 14, 2023 SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



Doing good through gentleness and reverence.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	John 14:15-21	The promise of the Holy Spirit
Monday	Acts 17:22-31	Paul in Athens
Tuesday	1 Peter 3:13-22	Suffering for doing right
Wednesday	Galatians 5:22-26	Fruit of the Spirit
Thursday	Acts 1:1-11	Jesus is taken up to heaven
Friday	Philippians 2:1-11	Imitating Christ's humility
Saturday	Psalm 66:8-20	Shout praises to God
Sunday	John 17:1-11	Jesus prays for his disciples

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence. 1 Peter 3:15b-16a (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Loving God, help us to see the path to life and salvation in Christ's suffering and death and to see your chosen way to heal and make all things new. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, with this food that we eat and your love that we receive, give us strength to care for others with gentleness and deep respect. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the Spirit of truth guide you into all things wise and loving.



MAY 14, 2023

HYMN OF THE WEEK

Thy Holy Wings



WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS



Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- What action do you take when you are angry at or disagree with someone?
- How do you think Jesus would respond if he had a strong difference of opinion with someone?

DEVOTIONS



Read: 1 Peter 3:13-22.

Suffering happens. Life is sometimes painful. Followers of Jesus Christ can suffer "for doing what is right" (v. 14). Unfortunately, there are those who claim to follow Jesus and think that inflicting suffering is being a hero for "the truth." That's not the case for biblical truth and the way of Christ Jesus who "suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous" (v. 18). In being faithful to Christ and Christ's way of life, we are to be bold (a hero, one might say) and give "an accounting for the hope that is in you" (v. 15). However, this description that gives a defense of what a Christian may think and believe is not to be done with anger, threats, unkind acts, or any act of violence. A courageous disciple makes their defense "with gentleness and reverence" (v. 16). Christ's reign, unlike the powers of the present age, is built upon the power of self-giving love and service to others. It's the way of Jesus Christ, and it's the freeing power of the followers of Jesus Christ.

Discuss: How can being gentle and reverent show more courage than an act of violence? *Pray:* Almighty God, help us to see in Jesus Christ not only the way of salvation but the way of life that witnesses to Christ with gentleness and reverence. Amen.

SERVICE



Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings for this week, how might you reach out to and serve alongside others who think differently than you?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



Faith is formed by the power of the Holy Spirit through personal, trusted relationships—often in our own homes. In John 14:15-21, Jesus gives us the promise of the Holy Spirit. As you continue reading the Gospel of John during the Easter season, highlight this reading. Then take time to write a list of people with whom you have a personal, trusted relationship.

Pray: Lord Jesus, send the Holy Spirit upon me so that I may grow in my faith and form life-giving relationships. Alleluia! Christ is risen. Alleluia! Amen.

